

Montana

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Outdoors



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THE COVER: The Montana Dept. of Fish and Game believes improved landowner/recreationist relations are within reach. To help achieve this all-important goal, we'll continue to devote plenty of pages to the subject. For several views on the situation, turn to page 13 (front cover, F&G photo: Donita Sexton). Much of Montana's vital mule deer habitat lies on private land. But without good relations with landowners, hunters often aren't allowed access to this game country (back cover, photo: Harry Engels).

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The Director's Column



When Henry David Thoreau wrote, "That man is richest whose pleasures are the cheapest," there was doubtless more game in the woods and more fish in the streams for men to pursue for sport and nourishment or to admire and contemplate.

But in those days, hard days on the body by current living standards, the cheap pleasures (by which Thoreau meant simple pleasures) were, for most Americans, about all the pleasures to be had. Now we have much more leisure time and almost infinite possibilities for recreation of every sort. But precious little of it is now cheap or simple.

Once the uncluttered, elevating satisfaction of hunting and fishing was a matter of uncracking a treasured second generation gun or rod and a short ride or hike to a favored stream or deer park. The satisfaction men felt from woods skills dutifully passed on to their children was uncomplicated by the recreational equipment market "hype"—the need for more expensive gear, sadly diminished wildlife habitat and most devastating of all, the fact that we now have thrice more sportsmen competing for proximity to wild things than populated the whole country during Thoreau's time. So it is not surprising that now the joy of hunting and fishing is diluted by finding a place in which to recreate.

Now, enter the landowner. The explosion in the number of hunters, fishermen and other outdoor users, coupled with the fact that private land is often vital wildlife habitat, has made cooperation of landowners imperative to perpetuation of outdoor skills and, in many cases, to perpetuation of wildlife species.

Herein lies a "catch-22." The very nature of this unfortunate condition creates an atmosphere totally

counter to its resolution. We require the landowner's good will because our skyrocketing numbers dictate that we spread out. Yet, the rancher who may have tolerated, or even enjoyed, the fellowship of hunters on his property now feels inundated by the guns of autumn, the increased potential for damage to his business, the wheel ruts, the mistakenly shot cow, the cut fence, the necessity to monitor recreationists on his ground instead of tending to his livelihood that, despite his best efforts, may not have been sustaining for several years.

Sporting organizations, landowners and this agency have long known the problem was complicated. The Dept. of Fish and Game has attempted to mitigate the inevitable conflict in many ways, such as: acquiring land to provide game ranges and hunting opportunities, pursuing cooperative agreements with landowners singly and in groups, encouraging sportsmen's respect for private property through magazine articles and TV and radio efforts and annually rewarding seven cooperative landowners.

But these and other measures to improve landowner/recreationist relations have been hampered by lack of a coordinated program to deal with this sticky problem. We've recently sought to correct this by staffing a new department position responsible for managing and augmenting the currently successful projects and organizing new ones. We realize the simple answers we once bandied about—like making friends with property owners—are still imperative, but are much more difficult in execution than in design. Perhaps Samuel Johnson's advice, "A man, sir, should keep his friendships in constant repair," has become a caveat we must carry afield like our mackinaw, 400 square inches of hunter orange above the waist and our rifle and knife.

Robert F. Wambach



Cemetery Island, Canyon Ferry Reservoir—F&G photo



Lewis and Clark Caverns—F&G photo: Lee Huyser



Loch Leven Fishing Access Site, Yellowstone River—F&G photo: Robert Rothweiler

Department Projects:

Land Acquisition

—a vital program mired in controversy

by Harley Yeager

“I AM NOT OPPOSED to the Fish and Game Department purchasing land, but I believe the Legislature should have a handle on buying. . . . Land taken out of production and the small amount of taxes paid on it is contributing to the higher cost of consumer goods and the increasing of taxes. . . . The Fish and Game Department bids on land and makes it almost impossible for anyone else to compete.”

These are the views of a Montana legislator, quoted in his hometown newspaper during the 1977 legislative session. continued



Sun River Game Range—photo: Bob Cooney

Until the opening of the 45th Montana Legislative assembly, the Dept. of Fish and Game land acquisition program sailed along rather smoothly. However, introduction of HB 84 during the opening days of the 1977 session placed a new cloud on the horizon. Originally, the bill required the Fish and Game Commission to obtain approval of the Montana Legislature before buying, exchanging, accepting gifts of or condemning agricultural land larger than five acres. After heated debate, the bill was finally amended to 160 acres. The department vigorously opposed the bill because it would have virtually ended the land acquisition program, since few landowners could wait up to two years for legislative approval before the department could purchase their land. Furthermore, the department believed a delay in land acquisition would only add to the soaring price of land and consequently would not make the best use of the sportsman's dollars—the source of the funding for part of the department's land acquisition program.

HB 84 was finally killed by a close 52-47 vote. However, defeat of the bill did not end the controver-

sy about the department's land acquisition program. For example, follow-up news stories criticized the department for the way in which land acquisition money was spent.

An audit report, prepared by a private firm under contract to the office of the Legislative Auditor, noted that more than 90% of the 190,000 acres owned by the department is situated in the western half of the state. The report stated that three counties—Lewis and Clark, Silver Bow and Deer Lodge—contain almost half the acreage; Yellowstone County, the most populous in the state, contains only 73 acres of department land. The auditors recommended the department evaluate its land acquisition policies to better serve recreational needs of Montanans.

The department's response to the audit is also contained in the legislative auditor's report. The department agreed with the auditors' recommendation, but noted that land acquisition policies are established by the Fish and Game Commission and are under constant review. (See "Land Acquisition Policy" elsewhere in this article.) The report also stated the department believes it is conforming to

Land Acquisition Policy

The following policy was adopted by the Montana Fish and Game Commission on June 23, 1977:

WHEREAS, a goal of the Montana Dept. of Fish and Game is to benefit the people of Montana and visitors with the optimum outdoor recreational opportunities; emphasizing the tangible and intangible values of wildlife and the natural and cultural resources of aesthetic, scenic, historic, scientific and archaeological significance, in a manner consistent with the capabilities and requirements of the resources, recognizing present and future human needs and desires and insuring maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment;

WHEREAS, the Montana Fish and Game Commission has the authority to set policies for and approve department acquisitions of interests in land;

WHEREAS, for fishing access, the Montana Dept. of Fish and Game has the duty to purchase fishing access sites from funds earmarked for that purpose;

WHEREAS, for wildlife habitat and access, under the stated goal, the department has a twofold responsibility to the people and to their wildlife resources: (1) to protect, preserve and enhance the habitat that produces a diverse supply of wildlife that is an integral part of Montana's heritage; and (2) to provide current and future generations of people an equitable distribution of diverse and high quality wildlife-oriented recreation (including hunting and appreciative uses of wildlife);

WHEREAS, for wildlife habitat and access, wildlife is a beneficial product of the land and intensifying human uses of Montana's land are diminishing the capability of the land to produce

optimum and diverse supplies of wildlife;

WHEREAS, for wildlife habitat and access, human demands are increasing for the tangible and intangible values of wildlife—and these values are important to the quality of human life in Montana and are public benefits;

WHEREAS, for wildlife habitat and access, in certain circumstances, department ownership and control of land provide the maximum opportunity to manage wildlife habitat;

WHEREAS, for state parks and recreation areas, the Montana Dept. of Fish and Game may purchase, lease, enter into agreements or accept donations to acquire for the state, areas, sites and objects which in its opinion and following proper appropriation should be held, improved and maintained as state parks, state recreational areas, state monuments or state historical sites under Sec. 62-304, for the purpose of conserving the scenic, historic, archaeological, scientific and recreational resources of the state;

WHEREAS, for surplus lands, the Dept. of Fish and Game, with the consent of the commission, has the authority to dispose of surplus lands and;

WHEREAS, surplus lands require the obligation of funds for operation and maintenance while they no longer meet the needs for which they were purchased.

NOW, THEREFORE, the following policy is established:

FOR FISHING ACCESS AREAS:

(1) Distribution of areas purchased (both by region and by type of water) will be based primarily on fisherman access needs as determined by the best

policies set by the commission.

Many acquisitions mentioned in the auditors' report are game ranges purchased to satisfy critical wildlife needs. Consequently, management focused on the primary objective for which the ranges were acquired: providing habitat for wildlife. However, other types of outdoor recreation are permitted as long as they do not interfere with the primary objective. When no conflict exists, livestock grazing may be permitted.

THE LEGISLATIVE AUDITORS' REPORT was not alone in criticizing certain aspects of the department's land acquisition program. On April 11, 1977, a radio program called "Agricultural Alert" carried a blast against the department's big game acquisition program. Sponsored by agricultural interests, this program dealt with legislative happenings and was broadcast over many Montana radio stations. The announcer said these agricultural interests favored department acquisition of picnic areas and fishing accesses, but not major land

purchases. The group supported passage of HB 84. A recurring theme for both the supporters of HB 84 and "Agricultural Alert" was that the department's acquisition program was removing prime agricultural lands from production and the department was not paying its fair share of taxes.

Using one of the department's newest acquisitions as an example, let's examine these charges. Situated 25 miles west of Choteau in Teton County, the 2,600-acre Ear Mountain Game Range was purchased in fall 1976 for \$100 per acre. The property includes grazing land and timber, interspersed with aspen and swampy spots. Mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, mountain lions and black and grizzly bears inhabit the area. The property provides needed access to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management holdings. Although livestock use the area, it provided only marginal grazing at best. Thus, the charge that the department removed prime agricultural land from production by this acquisition is not substantiated in this case.

Admittedly, some department acquisitions contain good agricultural land. Even though the department

available methods for consideration of supply and demand.

(2) The determining factor in each access site evaluation will be the relative need for fisherman access in that particular area. Secondary benefits will be considered in evaluating sites where fisherman access needs are comparable. However, where fisherman access sites are adequately meeting the needs of anglers, the department will not expand, add to or further develop any site with fisherman access funds merely to accommodate increasing demands for secondary uses.

(3) On larger prime fishing streams where navigability is not in question, smaller sized areas should be purchased and left relatively undeveloped for secondary uses. On smaller streams where navigability is questionable, access areas should be large enough to accommodate an appreciable amount of angling directly from the area. These larger areas may be developed for full accommodation of secondary uses.

(4) State dollars for fisherman access purchase will be matched with available federal dollars wherever this is appropriate.

FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT AND ACCESS AREAS:

To carry out land acquisition under Sec. 26-104.6, Revised Codes of Montana 1947, and related statutes, the department shall acquire, develop and manage land to protect, maintain and provide the wise use of wildlife resources for public benefit now and in the future.

FURTHER, in order to properly administer this policy, the commission establishes the following guidelines.

Acquisition of land for preserving and enhancing wildlife habitat will be done in a manner that will provide the highest amount of public benefits for the

cost of land, its development and management based on criteria:

(1) that consider the needs and desires of the people for wildlife-oriented recreation, including access to public lands and all possible tangible and intangible values of wildlife;

(2) that recognize the capabilities of the land to produce optimum and/or diverse supplies of wildlife;

(3) that consider the overall positive and negative impacts of each potential purchase;

(4) that evaluate all possible alternatives, including acquisition of interests less than fee title, to provide the same public benefits in accordance with stated wildlife program goals and objectives;

(5) that utilize a continually upgraded selection process to establish statewide priority of proposed wildlife habitat acquisition, including cost effectiveness procedures.

FOR STATE PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS:

(1) The department should acquire these lands only where the values set forth in Sec. 62-304 can be conclusively demonstrated.

(2) State parks and monuments shall be evaluated on the basis of unique scenic, natural, aesthetic, historic, geologic, archaeologic or scientific characteristics independent of location; and state recreation areas shall be evaluated on their capacity to provide outdoor recreation in proximity to population clusters with the long-range objective of equitable distribution of acquisitions in proportion to population.

FOR SURPLUS LANDS:

(1) The department shall carry out periodic reviews of the necessity of lands acquired remaining in department ownership so that lands wherein costs exceed public benefits may be declared surplus and disposed of.



Mount Haggin Ranch—F&G photo: Tom Warren



Painted Rocks Recreation Area, Painted Rocks Reservoir—F&G photo

does not always intend to buy these specific areas, they are often included in what the landowner wants to sell. Sometimes the department trades good agricultural land for other areas more beneficial for fish, wildlife and other recreational opportunities. On some acquisitions, hay land is sharecropped with adjacent landowners. However, some game ranges containing good agricultural land must remain under department ownership to properly manage the area for wildlife.

At Ear Mountain Game Range, several animal unit months (aum's) of summer livestock use were eliminated. (An animal unit month designates the length of time required to sustain 1,000 pounds of live weight [one mature cow, with or without a calf up to six months old], or five sheep, for a unit area.) Other department acquisitions have similarly eliminated aum's of livestock use. But even the collective loss of aum's could hardly be considered a crippling blow to the livestock industry.

Management plans for Ear Mountain call for return of native vegetation to pre-livestock conditions. Should the day ever come that this game range is needed more for production of livestock than for game (which provides food, too), then the area could conceivably be converted back to livestock use.

Too often the department is offered an important wildlife area, with the threat of subdivision if it isn't purchased. When the department is unable to purchase an area, usually because of funding limitations, and subdivision occurs, little chance exists to return the area to agricultural or wildlife use.

State law requires the Montana Fish and Game Commission to make payments in lieu of taxes. The commission-owned lands in each county are assessed and annual payments made in the same amount as if the land were privately owned. These payments are not required in counties in which the department owns less than 100 acres, nor for bird farms, fish hatcheries or land managed by the state's general fund (state park system lands). In 1976, the department paid \$72,000 (in lieu of taxes) to Montana counties from funds derived from sale of hunting and fishing licenses and Federal Aid in Fish and Wildlife Restoration funds.

Teton County will receive in lieu of tax payments for Ear Mountain but would lose personal property tax on any cattle displaced from the county by loss of summer grazing area. Although sportsmen traveling to this area and similar department areas around the state do not directly compensate the county for tax losses, their trade with local businesses is an economic advantage.

BESIDES HUNTING and fishing opportunities, the public is offered many types of outdoor recreation on department lands—camping, backpacking, hiking, picnicking, photography, rock hounding, berry and mushroom picking, bird watching, history appreciation, study areas for scientific research and an outdoor classroom for children.

By providing these opportunities (free, except for overnight camping in developed campgrounds), the department reduces the burden on the county to provide public recreation areas.

The department primarily acquires land as the opportunity exists, although all acquisitions must come under the scrutiny of a newly developed statewide comprehensive recreation planning system. A landowner or agent directly offers sites to the department, usually without any department solicitation. Some land is acquired through donation, e.g., the recent Champion Timberlands' donation on Salmon and Placid lakes. Land is also acquired through trade. For example, a small part of the Blackfoot-Clearwater Game Range was traded for The Anaconda Co.'s holdings on Belt Creek Canyon, above the town of Belt, about 30 miles southeast of Great Falls. The game range tract had high timber value, but was of little use to wildlife.

As specified in HB 791, passed by the 1977 Montana Legislature, the department, under policy guidelines established by the commission, shall select land and water areas to be investigated for possible acquisition. Personnel in the fish and game region where the acquisition is situated conduct the investigation. The public also plays an important role when acquisitions are initially presented. The department prepares an environmental impact statement on large acquisitions, thus providing the public an opportunity to comment. The department also solicits public input—notifying county commissioners when the department intends to buy land in their county and meeting with local citizens' groups on most land acquisitions. The department then determines if an appraisal should be made. Even though the property offered might contain outstanding recreational opportunities, if no feasible way of funding the project exists, then the process is stopped before appraisal. Sometimes interim funding, such as that available through The Nature Conservancy, a national conservation organization, is used. However, these funds must be paid back as soon as money is available from the department's acquisition funds.

As soon as an appraisal is authorized by the department, a qualified appraiser is selected. If agreement is reached between the department and seller, an option to buy is signed. The appraised price of the land forms the basis for the selling price. The signed option is then presented to the commission for approval.

If the commission approves the option, the next step is to present the acquisition proposal to the State Legislative Finance Committee for review before concluding the transaction.

ALTHOUGH THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL aspect of the department's acquisition program is purchase of winter game ranges, it is involved in other types of land acquisition. As a matter of fact, the department first became a landowner in 1908

Department Land Summary	ACRES			COST	
	Purchased	Leased	Totals	Purchased	Annual Lease
Administrative Sites	219.36 plus 8 lots	20.35	239.71 plus 8 lots	\$ 601.00	\$ 1,235.00
Game Management Areas	170,581.11	113,107.55	283,688.66	\$5,995,543.75	\$17,384.26
Fish Hatcheries and Spawning Stations	283.53	87.15	370.89	\$ 76,027.50	\$ 13.33
Fishing Access Areas	12,667.20	1,412.99	14,080.19	\$1,608,890.06	\$ 590.75
State Parks, Monuments and Recreation Areas	8,763.95 plus 48 lots	13,697.04	22,460.99 plus 48 lots	\$ 978,136.50	\$ 588.50
Totals.....	192,514.15 plus 56 lots	128,325.09	320,839.24 plus 56 lots	\$8,658,603.82	\$19,811.84

when for the modest fee of \$1, 4.36 acres was purchased from the Anaconda and Pacific Railroad. The area is now called Washoe Park Trout Hatchery, better known as the Anaconda Trout Hatchery. Acquisition of big game wintering areas began in 1937 with a small section in the Judith Mountains. The state parks system began that same year with title to the Lewis and Clark Caverns. The first public fishing access sites were purchased in 1958.

As of July 31, 1976, the Dept. of Fish and Game administered 192,514 acres of purchased land and 128,325 acres of leased land. This total of nearly 321,000 acres represents .0034%—slightly more than one-third of one per cent—of Montana. Of the total land owned and leased, administrative sites comprise 240 acres; game management and waterfowl areas, 283,689 acres; fish hatcheries and spawning stations, 371 acres; fishing access areas, 14,080 acres, and state parks, monuments and recreation areas, 22,461 acres.

Game management areas and fishing access sites are acquired with money from the sale of state hunting and fishing licenses, together with federal funds from excise taxes on sport hunting and fishing equipment. One dollar of every resident fishing license and nonresident one-day fishing license, plus five dollars of every nonresident seasonal or six-day license is set aside for purchase of fishing access sites. Also, Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (Bureau of Outdoor Recreation) dollars are used on a matching basis with state hunting and fishing license funds. Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) funds can also be used to match coal tax income to buy park lands—not just to match hunting and fishing license dollars. In short, BOR and coal tax funds can be used exclusively to buy a site. For example, a one-acre site was recently acquired within

the city limits of Miles City which will open several miles of the Yellowstone River to boating-based recreation.

Most state parks and monuments are developed with money from the state's long-range building fund. Operation and maintenance funds come at least partly from the state's general fund. An earmarked portion of the state's coal tax can also be used for acquisition, operation and maintenance of state parks, recreation areas, monuments and historic sites.

Land purchase is only the initial expense in providing areas for recreational use. Some type of development is usually needed, whether it is fencing, roading or sanitary facilities. Maintenance of roads, fences, signs, bridges, etc. is an ongoing and ever-increasing expense.

Water-based parks (those situated along lakes) may be acquired, developed, maintained and operated with funds obtained from the state's motorboat fuel tax. Members of the 1977 legislature increased the revenue available for water-based parks. This was accomplished by increasing the percentage from the state gasoline tax fund earmarked for water-based parks from .6 to .9 of one per cent.

Even though land controlled by the department represents a small percentage of Montana's total area, it provides a tremendous amount of quality recreational opportunity. As Montana's population grows, people with more leisure time on their hands will demand even more recreation sites and wildlife areas. Hopefully, the department can—with public support—continue to acquire these areas to keep pace with this increasing demand. Without active public support for the department's land acquisition program, the future of hunting, fishing and general outdoor recreation will most certainly suffer. ■

The Catchall

Good Hunting: The Real Secret

There is often an important difference between good hunting and successful hunting, and it is something the ethical hunter understands. In fact, that difference is what sportsmanship is all about. Sure, a person can go out and take game—be successful—but that doesn't mean he or she is a good hunter. By the same token, the good hunter can go home empty-handed and still have the satisfaction of knowing he did well.

A key factor in good hunting is the sportsperson's knowledge of the game and the habitat it occupies—not just the places where game is likely to be found during the hunting season, but the whole complex of habits, feeding patterns, life cycles and plant and wildlife species sharing game habitat. In short, meeting the mechanical requirements for success is not enough. The hunter should be a bit of an amateur naturalist, too.

Why bother? Well, from a selfish point of view, you cheat yourself if you don't. Hunting is a much richer experience if you take the time and trouble to see and understand what is going on around you in the field.

A duck blind can be a pretty miserable place when the birds don't fly. But you can take the edge off a north wind just by paying some attention to the shore birds or trying to identify the songbirds and gulls.

A good grouse hunter can read the woods like a book—where the deer are bedding, which plants are feeding the grouse, where the hawk has done its work on a rabbit.

Whether standing or still hunting, the deer hunter need never fear boredom if he is willing to watch and think about what he sees. The only danger is that he may become involved with the antics of a ground squirrel and ignore a nearby buck.

Then, too, there is the matter of respect for the game bird or animal. Any creature worthy of game status deserves the maximum in appreciation from the hunter. That includes a thorough knowledge of where and how it lives. This kind of knowledge makes much of the difference between the rewarding experience of taking game and the grim business of the slaughterhouse.

Finally, there is the simple truth that success, when it comes, is a whole lot more satisfying for the hunter who takes the trouble to learn. This kind of hunter is not just a visitor to the natural world; he or she belongs there. And there's no way that kind of hunter can ever have a bad hunt.—*Steve Bayless*

Wildlife Shorts

The only flying mammals are bats—of which there are over 2,000 living species.

The world's largest rodent is the capybara which grows up to 4 feet long and weighs up to 200 pounds.

Montana's largest rodent is the

beaver which can grow to 8 feet long and weigh as much as 70-80 pounds.

The Indian elephant has the longest mammalian gestation period—an average of 620 days and a maximum of 760 days.

Of the 8,600 known living species of birds, the albatross has the largest wing span—11 feet, 4 inches.—*Vince Yannone*

Snipe Hunting

Time was when one of the major hazards of visiting country cousins was to be left in some dark, lonely spot literally holding the bag—waiting for beaters to herd in the snipes. Many a "city slicker" waited far into the night for snipes that never appeared and friends that never returned.

There is a type of true snipe hunting, though, and the modern snipe hunter is serious about his sport. He must be steady and quick on the trigger to bring down one of the little feathered missiles because they spring up suddenly, then zigzag away in erratic flight.

The Wilson's snipe, also known locally as common snipe, jack snipe and marsh snipe, is a brownish barred bird about nine inches long, with a short neck, short tail and extremely long bill. The long bill, a



brick-brown colored tail barred with black and white at the outer feathers, and a white rim above and below the eye are distinguishing characteristics.

Snipes inhabit boggy meadows and wet areas along meandering streams where they probe the soft earth for food with their long bills. They are solitary birds during spring and summer but often gather during fall to share choice feeding sites, although they do not actually form flocks.

During spring mating season, male snipes perform aerial acrobatics and create a sound similar to that of "winnowing" night hawks. They circle tightly at high altitudes, then plunge into a rapid dive. The rush of air through open wing feathers makes

a characteristic humming noise.

Snipes generally remain concealed during the day, venturing into open areas during dusk and on cloudy days. Hunters will find these little birds a real challenge. They hold tightly to a dog and then almost explode from cover.

Last year (1976) marked the first season on Wilson's snipe in the Central Flyway portion of Montana. The 1976 season in the Central Flyway section opened Oct. 2 and ran through Nov. 30. In the Pacific Flyway, the season began Oct. 2, 1976 and continued through Jan. 2, 1977. Daily bag limit was 8 and possession 16 in each flyway. (The 1977 seasons and limits were set in September, too late for inclusion in this magazine.)—*Vern Craig*

License Sales Top All Records

A record 60 million Americans spent almost \$318 million on state hunting and fishing licenses, according to state license sales figures released by the U.S. Dept. of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Both figures are record highs," said Director Lynn A. Greenwalt, "and they show that Americans continue to find hunting and fishing major pastimes." In fact, one of every five Americans enjoys the outdoors this way. The figures represent an increase of \$23 million in state sales and 500,000 in the number of license holders over 1975. Since some states do not require licenses for ocean

Champion Donates Two Key Tracts



Champion Timberlands, a division of Champion International Corp. and a major landholder in western Montana, has donated two key tracts of land on Salmon and Placid lakes to the Dept. of Fish and Game. The two lakes are situated in the Clearwater drainage in the Lolo National Forest of northwestern Montana.

Gov. Thomas L. Judge said the two tracts would become state parks. He noted the donations are eligible for cost-sharing funds from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to develop the parks. "Preliminary estimates indicate that the land donated is valued at approximately \$400,000 and that the two state parks will be obtained for the people of Montana at no cost to them. This donation represents a continuation of Champion's beneficial involvement in both the economic and recreational development of western Montana," the governor said. Champion already participates in management of a recreation corridor along the Blackfoot River.

"This project truly demonstrates the benefits that can accrue to the people of Montana when government and private enterprise face the future in a spirit of cooperation and understanding," the governor concluded.

Salmon Lake (left) and Placid Lake. F&G photos: Robert Rothweiler

fishing, children under 16 or senior citizens, these figures are considered conservative estimates.

California led the nation in sale of fishing licenses with over 5.8 million resident and nonresident licenses, tags, permits and stamps sold. Michigan was second with over 1.6 million sold. Other very heavily fished states included Wisconsin, Missouri, Oregon, Tennessee and Texas. Minnesota attracted the most out-of-state fishermen in the country, with 415,710 visitors buying licenses in 1976. Wisconsin, Michigan, Montana and Tennessee also ranked high with tourist fishermen. Visitors to Montana bought 284,831 permits and resident fishermen bought 422,725.

Pennsylvania sold the most hunting licenses, tags, permits and stamps with over 1.9 million. Michigan, New York, Texas and Wisconsin followed closely. Montana had the distinction of being the state most frequently visited by out-of-state hunters. Last year, 127,822 nonresident permits were sold in the state, with 616,859 residents buying permits.

Hawaii sold the fewest licenses to hunters and fishermen.

The Little Things Count Up

One 100-watt incandescent lamp produces more light than two 60-watt lamps.

* * * * *

One 40-watt fluorescent tube provides more light than three 60-watt incandescent bulbs.

* * * * *

Using radial instead of conventional or bias-ply tires can result in a 3% improvement in gas mileage.

An idling engine burns about one-half pint (.24 liters) of gas every six minutes.

* * * * *

Installing storm windows and doors can reduce fuel requirements by about 15%.

* * * * *

Energy demands for home cooling can drop about 47% by setting air conditioning thermostats at 78°F (25.5°C), instead of 72°F (22.2°C).

* * * * *

Servicing your furnace regularly could mean saving 10% in home fuel consumption.

* * * * *

Most automobiles get about 21% more miles per gallon on the highway at 55 miles (88 kilometers) than at 70 miles (112 kilometers) per hour.

* * * * *

Although the United States has only about 6% of the world's population, it uses 35% of the energy consumed in the world.

* * * * *

A water faucet leaking one drop per second wastes over 200 gallons (760 liters) of water per month. That's over 600 kilowatt hours paid for and wasted annually.

* * * * *

Underinflated tires cause extra drag on the engine and increase the car's gas consumption by about 2% per pound of air pressure decreased.

* * * * *

Pilot lights for gas stove burners and ovens burn about one-third of the gas used by the appliance in one year.

The automobile accounts for about 14% of the total energy consumed in the United States.

* * * * *

About one-third of all private auto mileage is used commuting to and from work. Thus, car pools can conserve significant amounts of energy.—courtesy the Montana Energy Advisory Council

New Bird Book Available

Migratory shore and upland game birds—those other than waterfowl—receive exhaustive treatment in a new book edited by Dr. Glen Sanderson and made available by the International Assn. of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, with cooperation from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Management of Migratory Shore and Upland Game Birds in North America" grew out of a 10-year program of research coordinated by the Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Subcommittee of the international association. It brings together the latest information on habits, populations, distribution, etc. The book makes specific recommendations for conservation of a group that includes such little known species as the black rail at one extreme, to the widely popular mourning dove at the other.

Individual chapters cover the sandhill crane, rails and gallinules, American coot, American woodcock, common snipe, band-tailed pigeon, white-winged dove, mourning dove and shore birds. A concluding chapter, "The Resources and Their Values," summarizes the benefits from expanded management of this important group of migratory birds.

Copies of the book are available for \$1, to cover handling and postage,

Next Time

Watch for these features in the Nov./Dec. 1977 issue of *Montana Outdoors*:

How Much is Wildlife Worth? A thought-provoking article on the touchy subject of putting a price tag on wild animals. To the economist, a cutthroat trout might be worth \$4.95 or an elk \$1,700, but to someone else, they are priceless.

Forestry and Wildlife. An interview with Robert F. Wambach, the department's new director, who is also an authority on forestry practices.

Hunter Education. Certainly, hunter education ranks among the department's most vital projects. And Montana's program has always been one of the best, including several international awards.

Goose Music. A reprint from Aldo Leopold's conservation classic, "A Sand County Almanac," and an excellent selection of color photographs.

Waterfowl Scenes for Framing. A selection of top waterfowl photographs by Montana's best photographers.

from: International Assn. of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 1412 16th Street NW; Washington, DC 20036. Payment should accompany orders.

Department Film Called "Outstanding"

The Dept. of Fish and Game has continued its practice of producing award-winning motion pictures.

The American Assn. for Conservation Information (AACI) recently ranked the department's latest release, "The Yellowstone Concerto," number one, after judging entries submitted by other U.S. and Canadian

agencies. (AACI is an international organization of information professionals from state, provincial and federal wildlife and natural resource agencies.)

Directed, shot, edited and partly written by Craig Sharpe, the department's motion picture production manager, the film was called "outstanding" by AACI judges. The film eloquently illustrates the threats to the majestic Yellowstone River. Incredibly, the mighty Yellowstone flows over 600 miles, from Wyoming through Montana, to its confluence with the Missouri River, without major "improvements" by man.

Today, the Yellowstone is threatened—primarily from the

prospect of water depletion and plans for Allenspur Dam near Livingston. To preserve the free-flowing river in its natural state, the department has applied for a reserved flow to protect existing water users—including fish, wildlife and recreation. "The Yellowstone Concerto" and other department information projects, including a special issue of *Montana Outdoors* devoted to the Yellowstone and released in February 1977, are intended to promote understanding of the department's plea to help the Yellowstone.

Sharpe, who deserves most of the credit for the film's success, is working on the department's next film on deer.—*Bill Schneider*

Picking Apart Owl Pellets



Many times, owls devour small prey whole. After their strong digestive juices dissolve soft, nourishing parts, bones, teeth, pieces of skull, indigestible fur and even the hard exoskeleton of insects is regurgitated in the form of a tightly packed pellet. This pellet weighs only about one or two ounces.

Shape and size of the pellet often provide a clue to the owl's species. Large owls regurgitate larger pellets than those of smaller owls.

By soaking the pellet in warm water and then

separating it with tweezers and dental pick, one can discover what the owl ate 6-10 hours before it regurgitated. Pellets shown are from a great horned owl, and the bones are those of a squirrel—parts of the skull, teeth, back and tail bones, ribs and legs.

One can often spot an owl's favorite feeding perch by finding several pellets at the base of a tree or stump. Long-term studies of pellets can also provide valuable information about small mammals which provide part of the owl's food supply.—*Craig Sharpe*

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In Search of a Better Relationship

We've probably devoted more pages in *Montana Outdoors* to landowner/recreationist relations than any other subject. In addition, many other department employes spend a large share of their time promoting better relations with landowners. But there's still plenty of room for improvement. And we all know it.

During the past few years, it's been give and take. With cooperation of landowners, recreationists and agencies, access problems have lessened in some areas. In others, however, the irresponsible actions of a few pseudosportsmen and deteriorating economic conditions in rural Montana have angered landowners into posting large tracts of private land.

We don't know whether the overall situation has improved in recent years. But we often hear that it has steadily worsened.

Likewise, we don't have all the answers. However,



the department will be making an even greater effort in the future. One recent action taken by new department Director Robert Wambach has been creation of a new position within the department to coordinate and organize special landowner/recreationist projects.

One thing is certain. If various groups and agencies can't work together, there's no chance of improvement. Toward this goal, we're presenting several different views in this issue. In the future, we'll be covering other views of the situation, new projects as they develop and any major strides toward a better relationship.—Ed.

The Landowners' Views

I AM SURE there will be disagreement on many things written here. But the fact that landowners have been invited to write these articles is indicative that we want to communicate. Communication is the only way we can arrive at a common understanding and proceed toward a mutual resolution of landowner/recreationist problems.

I believe Montana landowners clearly and emphatically have accepted their responsibility to the animals of Montana. Landowners provide something like 85% of the animals' winter range and a large portion of their summer habitat. In the late 1930s, a rancher in the Augusta area attempted to kill and chase from his ranch a large number of elk which were eating up his winter feed. Since, I can't recall any major instance where force or planned killing

were used by any rancher to protect his feed from wild game.

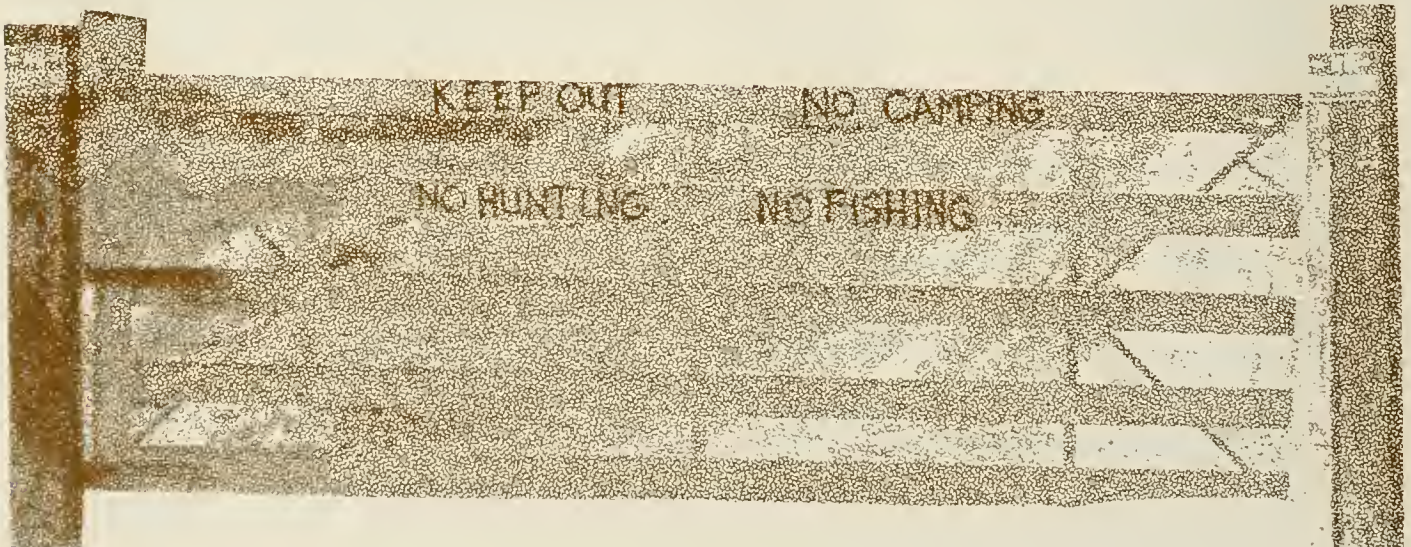
In certain places at certain times, when game populations become excessive, ranchers I know have petitioned the Dept. of Fish and Game for a special season; I have done so myself. I have received panels to fence haystacks and have also known the department to hire men to drive the animals out of the areas where they were becoming a problem.

By and large, landowners have accepted responsibility for game animals and have furnished them with feed and repaired the damage they do to fences. Landowners have added these expenses to their operation costs and have not attempted to get compensation from any public funds for doing this.

To put it bluntly, I feel the landowner has no responsibility to hunters on his land, *per se*. Hunting on private land is strictly up to the landowner. How much hunting, when, where and in what manner the hunting is to be done is, in my opinion, up to every individual landowner. His decisions are based on—and should be protected by—our concept of private property.

Fortunately for all of us, the large majority of landowners allow free hunting on their land. A survey done by a legislative committee studying access to public lands shows that over 80% of the landowners allow hunting on their lands; 90% of these landowners do not charge.

But more and more landowners are indicating they are becoming more apprehensive of the increasing pressure put on areas with better hunting. Whereas total license sales are down, the number of hunters arriving at a desirable hunting site is up, in our experience. The mobility of the hunters with their 4 x 4s and their increased freedom to hunt brought on by shorter work weeks and longer vacations have put a terrific burden on landowners. I'm sure the majority of landowners in the future will either lock up their lands or restrict use of their lands more stringently. Every year, there are more examples of wanton destruction, vandalism, abuse of pasture lands and



crops, killing of stock and destruction of fences. We all realize this is done by a very small portion of the hunting population. But to protect himself from the small minority, the landowner will have to police and regulate all hunters. Because policing and regulation are very expensive to accomplish, the easiest, cheapest solution is to lock up the land.

Most landowners don't want to do this, and most sportsmen don't want it. But what do we do?

One method would be more and better policing of sportsmen by their fellow sportsmen. I might add that landowners have no problem with hunters; the problem lies in describing a "hunter."

A gun, a license, an orange vest and a motor vehicle do not make a hunter. In my opinion, a person who wishes to match wits with a game animal in the animal's natural environment, on foot or on horseback, for the meat or for the enjoyment he gets from the challenge, is a sportsman and is welcome on most ranches. A person who wants to shoot only from his vehicle, who sits in the local pub until sundown and then road hunts when the small band of partially tame deer is in the meadow in front of the rancher's house is, to me, not a hunter. Even worse, this person does get up at sunrise, makes the same run up and down the road, shoots his deer within 50 feet of the road, puts it in his vehicle and then proceeds to the pub to explain his great deed, while the meat is spoiling in the hot sun on his hot vehicle. To speed this spoilage process, sometimes the animal is strapped over the hot radiator of the vehicle.

I certainly don't know the solution. However, I feel the state or the Dept. of Fish and Game has a responsibility to the people to whom they sell licenses. I feel that in the not-too-distant future, department officials will be forced to give a hunter a place to hunt when they sell him a license. With computer technology now accessible, I think an inventory of every ranch in good hunting areas could be made. Then, after consulting with the owners, a specific number of hunters could be sent to a specific area.

I mentioned earlier the legislative committee that studied access to public lands. You know—and I know—Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service lands are owned by the public and are administered under a multiple-use concept so all facets of the public can use and enjoy them. I agree with this concept and will support legislation or whatever it takes to secure access to significant blocks of these lands.

State lands are a different situation. These lands are not public lands, *per se*. They belong to the school trust. The Enabling Act, under which the state of Montana was created, designated Sections 16 and 36 in every township for the schools of Montana. Any income from rental of these lands or interest from sale of them is used in the school foundation program. The lands remain in the school trust; any money from sale of these lands also remains in the trust, and the interest only can be used for schools.

It is mandated by the Enabling Act, by courts and



legislation, that these lands be administered to return the greatest dollar amount to the schools. Money, restricted only by proper management, is the only criterion for use of the lands. Aesthetic values, recreational uses or other good and pleasing uses are not valid uses, unless they do not detract from the dollar return of these lands or the school trust fund is monetarily compensated for these uses. If public access to these lands is legislated, this detracts from the return the schools are now obtaining from these lands. I assure you the state of Montana would be in court immediately.

In closing, I would like to express the hope that sportsmen and landowners could resolve their differences by communication rather than by legislation. As sportsmen launch more and more organized attempts to secure access to streams and private property, there will be more and more organized resistance by landowners—and neither will obtain his goals.—*Jack Galt*

continued

I HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE to live my entire life on a foothill mountain ranch, part of which was owned by my grandfather. A college-age son intends to continue the family tradition, if we can survive the present economic problems of the cattle business.

The ranch helps support a wide variety of Montana wildlife, including a few elk. I have always been a wildlife enthusiast and have been fortunate to have a family which tolerates my absences. As a small boy, I spent every available opportunity prowling up and down the creek, watching birds and animals or fishing and hunting them in season. Wildlife continues to occupy a large part of my life—as a tranquilizer and my favorite recreation on one hand and a builder of tensions within me on the other, as I have become deeply involved in maintaining a quality wildlife heritage for future generations. This is to me a most perplexing and challenging problem as we attempt to protect and save our remaining wildlife habitat from the sometimes blind encroach-

ment of man. I have no doubt that viable wildlife populations will survive in our nation if we provide adequate *habitat*.

As I view it, we who are fortunate enough to own land are involved in this problem in two very big ways. The first, and I feel most important, is the fact that we, as land operators, make everyday decisions that apply to our pocketbooks. The decisions are often made on this basis alone. Wildlife and its habitat were not always involved in these land use decisions. The second is whether we, as private landowners, will let recreationists use the wildlife that our private land produces. I feel the first conflict between economics and wildlife habitat is far and away the most important; unless we resolve it satisfactorily, the second conflict of trespass will no longer exist because we will no longer have wildlife.

I have a very lonesome feeling when I view the complex legal, social, moral and economic conflicts that make up what we are referring to as wildlife-land use conflict. Our Constitutional republic is founded on an individual's right to own property. As legal owners of that property, we are allowed to manage it for economic benefit. This foundation has allowed us to develop into the envy of other nations. We have a standard of living undreamed of by a large majority of the rest of the world's people. This standard of living also includes, to this date, a great wildlife heritage. I don't believe that we realize just how big a value we put on our wildlife heritage. This is the social value that wildlife has. The hunter, fisherman, camera bug, bird watcher and yes, even we ranchers, get a tremendous emotional lift from seeing wild animals or even just knowing they exist.

For this reason, I feel private landowners need to consider the moral obligation to those who do not own land but are affected by what we do with our land, far more than just if we produce enough food and fiber on it. I believe we are morally obligated to perpetuate our wildlife heritage to the best of our ability. If we fail to do this, our standard of living will be immeasurably lower. This may not show on Dow Jones averages or government reports, but it will surely show in the values of our people. This same obligation applies to managers of public land.

Specifically, we need to stop subsidizing land use practices, destructive to wildlife, based on economics alone and search for alternatives that at least compromise the social and economic conflicts. There will be instances where compromise will not be possible. To help solve these, we must recognize the tremendous economic value wildlife has. I do not mean just the value of the wild meat, outfitter fees, gasoline, booze, motel fees, ammunition, etc. that wildlife generates, but far more. Let's determine a value for wildlife enjoyment. How many more psychiatrists and mental institutions and drug treatment centers would we need without our wildlife heritage? To find the answer, compare Montana with New York City.

Although I detest the principle of government subsidy, it may become necessary to recognize a



private landowner's contribution to wildlife and reward him economically for it, based on the higher and wider values discussed earlier. This compensation should consider both habitat and public use of the wildlife provided by the landowner. I find great discomfort in the present trend toward paid hunting. I would hate to see hunting become a rich man's game. Possibly some sort of compensation to landowners would help avoid this.

However, the cost cannot be borne by hunters and fishermen alone. Wildlife should be supported by all who enjoy it, rather than just those who purchase hunting licenses, firearms, etc. The financial burden is much too large for our state wildlife agencies, although they should administer the funds or at least determine who is eligible.

Those of us who make our living on the land have been forced by inequitable economic conditions to extract every dollar possible from the land. I believe this has accelerated wildlife conflicts, although greed would probably have done the same thing eventually. This unfavorable economic plight has caused landowners to sell to subdividers, straighten streams, clear brush and overgraze—to mention a few abuses—in an attempt to stay in business. A man with notes at the bank, taxes and operating expenses to pay, as we all have, has a gun at his head.

We need to avoid confrontation if at all possible. Maybe I should say we need to remove confrontation

from our conflict. Blackmail has occasionally accomplished an end. However, it also leaves scars that may never heal. I realize this is an ideal and probably has little chance of being accepted and lived up to 100% by everyone. Landowners have, at this time, strong historic, legal rights, but we may not have the political power to maintain them if we become too hardheaded.

It seems to me that many land uses that destroy wildlife habitat may ultimately destroy the productivity of the land for everything else. Land management practices that consider only the short-term economic picture are often poor ones. The environmental impact statement has been abused; however, it has forced us to attempt to analyze the long-term effect of our plans. It has forced a conscience on us.

I believe some federal agencies have been too slow in upgrading the values of wildlife and wildlife habitat. No one will dispute the great contributions they have made in the field of conservation. But I find some of them overlooking and downgrading wildlife potential in their planning. We cannot justify using public money to destroy public values. I suggest such agencies recognize natural wildlife habitat and its full value in their early planning before the conflicts from wildlife organizations and agencies arise.

Ownership of land is a privilege enjoyed by few. I believe we would stand much taller in the eyes of



everyone if all of us who are landowners would accept the moral responsibility of allowing others to enjoy our land when possible. I am sure there are times and places when public use of private land would be disruptive. However, the great majority of private land should be shared with our less fortunate neighbors. This would alleviate some of the conflicts over livestock use of public land.

For example, on our ranch we are allowed to graze livestock on some Bureau of Land Management holdings in the Judith Mountains. This land comprises less than half of the summer grazing land we use in that area. We allow year-round public access to the entire ranch, subject to permission. We do not deny anyone, because we feel they are responsible once identified. We make no special note of the public land unless recreationists ask to go to it. We then instruct them and explain our feelings. As long as we are allowed to use the public land, we treat it the same as our own and all we ask is for the public to reciprocate. It has worked well for everyone.

We have recently witnessed a couple of new neighbors in our area close land that had previously been open. I believe this was done to show people they were the owners and could control the land. Perhaps it was pride of ownership. Respect for the rights of landowners and expressed appreciation for privileges allowed would go a long way toward overriding this landowner attitude. Most of us would get greater satisfaction from sharing a city cousin's enjoyment than denying it to him.

The "slob" hunter does exist in a small minority. Other recreationists must help us police these fellows. Maybe the best protection we have from them is to be sure we have a "true sportsman" kind of individual around them. Those slobs are much less likely to forget their manners if they think someone is watching. Perhaps the best way to be sure someone is watching is to allow public access.

Regulation of off-road vehicle travel has helped control illegal trespass and damaging cross-country travel on private land. Reasonable off-road vehicle regulation is needed on all land and should remove one sore spot with many of us.

I see no other alternative to solving the trespass problem than a compromise or change in attitude by all concerned. We need to explore the moral responsibility of landowners to share their precious commodity in a nonconsumptive way with our landless brothers and sisters. They, in turn, have a moral responsibility to try to understand our many unique problems and make their presence on the ranch as little bother to us as possible.

We need to educate our youth on the rights and responsibilities of land ownership and land use. They need the opportunity to enjoy and develop a respect for all life, wild and otherwise. They need to learn the basic fact that wildlife populations are largely controlled by available habitat. Recognition of this by a majority of people would help resolve our wildlife-land use conflicts because it would help people realize the impact of different land uses.

I do not feel that perpetuating our wildlife heritage endangers my right to own land, if we can remove the hostile attitudes each side has for the other. This would seem to be getting more and more difficult as our overorganized society bounces from one extreme to another seeking political solutions to everything. This allows one faction to pit one agency or group against another and vice versa, attempting to get their plans or ideas accepted. Everyone loses in this fiasco—the land, wildlife and people. What is needed to resolve our disagreements is common sense, not political nonsense.—*John Gilpatrick*

WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION of protecting the basic resource—wildlife and wildlife



habitat—I see landowner/recreationist relations as the biggest problem facing the Dept. of Fish and Game today. *Without the cooperation of both the private landowner and the public recreationist, we cannot have a successful fish and game program in this state.*

In the past, many recreationists unfortunately took public use of private lands for granted. Those days are over and, in some areas, have been over for a good number of years. With the increase in public use problems, more and more private land is now being shut off to the public. Public access across private lands to gain entry to public lands and public waters is becoming harder to obtain with each passing year.

While the department has been involved in an important land acquisition program for some time now, it is obvious we cannot afford to keep up with the ever-increasing number of private closures through a massive purchase of land all over the state. We must spend our available land acquisition funds on really *critical* properties and access sites.

We are apparently going to have to spend a great deal more time and effort and money in working with landowners and recreationists. This is going to have to be done at the *local* level, with department personnel responding to on-the-ground problems in a positive and constructive manner, initiating communications between landowners and recreationists which will lead to the alleviation of at least some of the landowner problems we are faced with today.

Some of the private landowners in the Blackfoot Valley have been working with local sportsmen on conflicts we have seen in that area. With the help of the Dept. of Fish and Game, Missoula County Commissioners, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, The Nature Conservancy, Champion Timberlands and the Forestry Division of the Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation, we have managed to put together a walk-in hunting area which involves both public and private lands in the Garnet Range, and a recreational corridor down a 30-mile (48-kilometer) stretch of the Blackfoot River. We still have some problems to work out, but things are much better now than they were before. A great deal of private land remains open today because of the efforts of landowners and recreationists working together in a responsible manner. I can't say programs such as the walk-in area and the recreational corridor are going to be successful all over the state of Montana, but I do think we should be responding to landowner/recreationist conflicts with similar ideas and programs.

It seems to me that in this particular area of concern—landowner/recreationist relations—the critical need is for the department to listen to the landowner's problems and to respond to those problems whenever possible and as soon as possible. What I believe has happened is many landowners feel that no one is really interested in helping them, no one is listening, no one is responding. Having worked with numerous hunters and fishermen in the Blackfoot, I am convinced that a great many

sportsmen are deeply concerned with establishing and expanding good relationships with landowners, but they need to meet with landowners in an atmosphere that will allow conflict to be worked out in a responsible manner. I believe the Dept. of Fish and Game can carry out a very important role in bringing the two groups together and working with them to come up with something more attractive than what I see as the eventual alternative—the increased closing of private lands to the general public, and legal action taken by public interest groups of the state to force access across private lands in order to reach public lands and waters.—*Land M. Lindbergh*

Two Hunters View Access Problems

AS A HUNTER, I would say that landowner/recreationist relationships in my area (Treasure County, western Rosebud County and Big Horn County, north of the Crow Reservation) have been pretty poor in the last 10 years or so, but show some signs of improving.

As one whose neighbors are mostly landowners, I would have to sympathize with their problems with recreationists, too. Dept. of Fish and Game regulations such as those requiring hunters to obtain permission from the landowner before hunting have certainly helped, but the department could improve its methods of issuing licenses and permits to fit fluctuations in wildlife populations and more evenly distribute hunting pressure. More wardens and less administration would help, too. Many farmers and ranchers in this area have gone to permit systems to limit and control hunters. The Rosebud-Treasure Wildlife Assn. and the Big Horn County Rod and Gun Club also print permit books and "Hunting With Permission Only" signs which they distribute free to landowners.

Most landowners will give the usual time-honored reasons for refusing hunters—gates left open, grass torn up by 4-wheel drive vehicles, trash thoughtlessly dumped, livestock harassed and deer and birds shot and left lying. But other factors in no way the fault of the hunter have also caused closures in recent years—drought bringing increased fire danger, a marked decrease in mule deer populations and pheasant population decreases in some areas and the economic squeeze which agriculture has been in for several years which causes ranchers and farmers to be less tolerant of hunters and fishermen, whom they see as just another problem, and in some cases, as contributing to their financial woes.

Locally, landowners near the Sarpy and Colstrip

mines have experienced stealing, poaching and vandalism and have posted their land. The practice, now abandoned, of closing the season in Yellowstone County two weeks earlier than in Treasure and Rosebud counties allowed hunters from these areas to descend on us, angering landowners and local hunters alike. Some ranchers still hang up a "No Hunting" sign the minute a Billings area car pulls into the yard. Interestingly, many landowners feel local hunters do the most damage and make themselves most unwanted, while out-of-state hunters are often more appreciative and responsible toward private property, not taking permission to hunt for granted.

Improvements in landowner/recreationist relationships could be made on both sides. Landowners could be more understanding of hunters' difficulties in finding places to hunt, especially here where almost all the land is privately owned. The landowner could help himself by keeping track of whom is hunting where, as by the permit system. On the other hand, the hunter should remember he is a guest, just as he would be in someone's home. Landowners appreciate the hunter (or fisherman, rock hound, etc.) getting acquainted with him before the season begins. I have neighbors who have had chickens killed and livestock run through fences by bird hunters who didn't control their dogs. And at least one neighbor feels the pheasant hunter should help feed the pheasants in bad winters if he wants to

hunt them next fall. Hunters should find out how landowners feel about these things and should police their own ranks as well. The person most likely to have a place to hunt next fall is the one who has gotten to know the landowner beforehand, who has done him a favor or treated him fairly in business dealings and shown concern for his problems, one who has proved himself a good hunter previously and who knows he is a guest. The landowner who allows the sportsman on his place should be friendly and not resent his presence.

Landowners and recreationists could get along much better if they would just put themselves in the other person's place now and then.—*Lynne Eggart*

LANDOWNER/RECREATIONIST relations have grown worse in our area in past years. We have more people competing for less game on less open land. The days when you could drive through the hills and hunt almost anywhere are probably gone forever in our area. Many landowners now charge a trespass fee or refuse to give any kind of permission to hunt, while hunters are sometimes carrying maps and attempting to locate public land where they can hunt without fear of being accused of trespass.

To many hunters, the subject of public lands is very touchy. Most hunters are very indignant, and I think



rightly so, when they are denied access to Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service and even state school lands by private landowners. Even though the landowner pays a lease on these lands, the cost per animal unit is usually less than that on private land. So the hunter feels the lessee is getting a bargain on land that everybody owns and so should share some of these benefits by allowing public recreation on these lands. If you look at a large map of Montana showing public lands, it is amazing how much of our state is public domain. If all these lands were open to hunting, it would certainly take a great deal of the pressure off those fine folks who do allow public hunting. There is usually some area on a ranch not being used for grazing at certain times of the year, so a rancher with public land might be able to trade off and allow some hunting on his private land in place of the public land he controls. If everyone allowed just a little hunting, our access problems would solve themselves.

Is the "hunter" that terrible creature who leaves gates open, shoots livestock and hurls beer cans about the countryside? For the most part, these accusations are not true, but all these things and more have been done by people who called themselves hunters. It is our duty to "clean up our act" if we wish to continue to be able to hunt. I feel one of the best things a hunter can do is to join his local rod and gun club. By attending meetings, he will become much more knowledgeable about wildlife, its needs and problems. He will have a chance to talk with fish and game personnel who are in contact with landowners and their problems. It is a great place to learn new ideas and find out what is going on locally and in other parts of the state. A club can accomplish many things that a private individual would have no chance of doing. I don't know of anyone who is active

in a rod and gun club who is a bad hunter—members just want a chance to be outdoors and enjoy a great sport.

It has been suggested that the hunting seasons be shortened, that hunters get out and shoot their game and go home. But to many, many hunters, it is the chance to get out and not the killing of game that is important. Although I can understand the feelings of a landowner faced with a lot of hunters, the landowner should also try to understand the hunter and his feelings.

At a Fish and Game Commission meeting in Miles City, a man from Texas who owned a ranch near Miles City suggested landowners be issued a certain number of permits for deer and antelope on their land and that they be allowed to sell these permits for whatever they choose. I am very much opposed to this idea, because I think it would soon lead to an end of hunting for the average Montanan—he would be priced out of the picture. Our wild game belongs to the state, and that means each and every person in this state equally. It does not belong to any individual, so the argument of "my deer" and "my antelope" from a landowner does not hold water because those deer and antelope were there before he was and will be there when he is gone. The right for Montanans to go a 'huntin' has been part of this state since men were here and I hope it will never pass.

To the landowners I say, please try to understand the hunter a little better, give him a break. To the hunters, we have brought our problems on ourselves; we must be better sportsmen. Talk to your landowner friends; do a favor for them for the privilege of hunting on their land. Do your best to see that your sons and daughters are taught good sportsmanship. Shape up, or we are going to lose more hunting every year.—*Bill Millhollin*

continued



Anglers Have Access Problems, Too

THINKING ABOUT THE PROBLEMS between landowners and fishermen takes me back 25 or 30 years to when I was just a beamish fisherman in the Paradise Valley of the Yellowstone.

In those days, ranchers and fishermen all seemed to know each other. If you stopped to see a rancher on the way to the river, it was in the nature of a courtesy call, with talk about how the grass was doing and how the oldest boy was making it in high school. On the way out, you dropped off a couple of cleaned fish, and the rancher's wife would say how delighted she was.

For better or worse, those days quite obviously are gone. Since then, land ownership has shifted into ever larger parcels, with out-of-state ownership common. Left behind to manage the place is a foreman who may be indifferent or downright surly in his attitude toward fishermen.

The increasing popularity of fishing brings a continually increasing number of anglers to a decreasing amount of stream footage. Besieged by seemingly endless carloads of fishermen seeking access, the landowner, no matter how friendly at the outset, may have second thoughts.

The more fishermen he lets in, the greater the chance that some will be of the poorly socialized breed that cause trouble for the rest of us. The rancher, who doesn't gain anything by letting fishermen in, begins to notice that some of them are leaving his gates open, letting their dogs chase his milk cows, stretching his barbed wire fence scrambling over and throwing trash along the stream.

The landowner begins to ponder setting his dog on the next batch of unknown anglers that shows up, or, perhaps, making them pay up, in advance, for fishing privileges.

Along the line, there gets to be a clamoring that sends genuine sportsmen off to look for someplace else to fish. The prospects for finding such a place decline as trout stream footage is eaten up by subdivision, dams, highways, pollution and agricultural and industrial diversion. It becomes clear that the fishing opportunities we have now are all we are going to have.

So what does all this mean, and what can be done about it? I suggest that social and cultural forces far from the nearest trout stream sometimes go a long way to roost. The estrangement between fishermen and landowners reflects the tension that men and women in America feel among and within themselves.

Men make four times the money they thought possible, but their wives leave them and their



children grow up to call them fools. Then they wonder why they don't feel good, so they make still more money, or take up mountain climbing, or fishing, or buy a little place on the Yellowstone and tell the foreman to keep those damned fishermen out.

Or, if our contemporary American takes up fishing, he does so with the competitive spirit of the market place, and if a landowner thinks he can stand in the way, he gets the treatment usually reserved for the executives of competing companies. Or so it seems.

So what can a reasonable person do about all this? For my part, I will continue to cherish the ranchers who let me in. Beyond that, one may only attempt to conduct his personal affairs with the standard Boy Scout honesty, courtesy, fairness and understanding of the other fellow's situation.

The goal, in short, is to remain a sportsman in a world where the gill net is preferred over the barbless hook. For its efficiency, don't you know?—*Dan Vichorek*

Recreation Corridors

PARTS OF WESTERN MONTANA are changing profoundly because of population increases. Although public outdoor recreation resources appear unlimited in our state, expanding populations have moved beyond established recreation areas onto private lands—sometimes at the invitation of the landowner, sometimes not.

Free-flowing rivers are especially attractive to outdoor recreationists. And when these scenic rivers are found in populated areas and where most of the adjacent river corridor is privately owned, conflicts between the recreationist and the private landowner are inevitable. Usually, the problem stems from a few careless river users or "slob" recreationists. Such confrontations may often result in the closure of private land to all recreationists. Evidence of landowner problems with recreationists often appears as "no trespassing" and "keep out" signs. One group of landowners has approached the problem of managing a river corridor to accommodate recreationists, at the same time protecting the river resource and their own rights.

In the late 1960s, several landowners along a 30-mile (48-kilometer) stretch of the Blackfoot River in Missoula County and a small part of Powell County began to develop a management plan for their lands adjacent to the river. Their objectives included protecting the natural, scenic and recreational integrity of the Blackfoot corridor as well as eliminating confrontations between private landowners and recreationists. With assistance from The Nature Conservancy and the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (regional office in Denver), the plan began to take shape in the early '70s. Early work by

Hank Goetz and Chuck Hollenbaugh at the University of Montana in Missoula provided the basis for a master plan. Participation in planning was eventually expanded to include individual and corporate landowners and land management agencies—the Dept. of Fish and Game and the Forestry Division of the Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation.

The Missoula County Commissioners organized the Blackfoot River Recreation Management Advisory Council, a coalition of private and corporate landowners and local, state and federal land managers and planners. Through this advisory council, the county commissioners accepted responsibility for managing public use on private land. The county commissioners and Dept. of Fish and Game committed funds, materials and administrative assistance for implementing the project. The advisory council's objective of a functional management program for the 30 miles (48 kilometers) of mostly privately owned river frontage by summer 1976 was accomplished.

From the private landowner's standpoint, whether individual or corporate, the project has offered many benefits. Landowners realized that posting land would create some additional problems—landowners would be faced with patrolling to assure compliance with no trespassing regulations. If violators were discovered, the landowner would have to spend time reporting the violation to the appropriate law enforcement agency. This represented time spent away from the landowner's ranch, logging operation, etc.

Through the Blackfoot River Recreation Management Project, the private landowner has some recourse. By leasing areas *selected by the private landowner* as recreation access sites to Missoula County or the Dept. of Fish and Game, control and responsibility for managing public use at these sites would fall to the agencies. Besides specific access sites, the river corridor was also included in the lease agreement. (This corridor has been temporarily defined as an area 50 feet [15 meters] from the high water mark on either side of the river. This definition could be altered later.) Landowners could restrict use of access sites on private land to activities compatible with objectives of the plan and interests of the landowner. Some private landowners were willing to allow daytime activities such as fishing, river floating, picnicking and swimming, but felt that overnight camping and fire building should be restricted to public land along and near the Blackfoot River.

The public has been allowed access across some private land to the river, and unrestricted movement along the river corridor for primarily daytime activities. On the other hand, the landowner received assistance from public agencies to manage public use on private land. The advisory council hired a recreation manager to patrol the river corridor and assure compliance with specifics of the plan. Site design, signs and personal explanation will hopefully encourage the public's cooperation. However, the manager may summon appropriate authorities if the

public does not cooperate or if he encounters disrespect for private property.

The structure of the plan provides that local landowners, land managers and public agencies—in cooperation with local recreationists—will determine the future recreation character of the Blackfoot River. The plan is specific enough to give direction to an overall management program, yet general enough to allow for considerable modification.

After only one year, the project has reduced conflicts between private landowners and recreationists. Some recreationists have supported the plan by cooperating with it, attending public meetings and attempting to self-police their ranks. Great strides are being made toward improving the relationship between the recreationist and the private landowner on the Blackfoot River. Landowners elsewhere on the Blackfoot and on the Smith River in central Montana have expressed interest in this concept of management of public use on private land.—Tom Greenwood

• More detailed information is available in the "Blackfoot River Guide," produced by the Parks Division of the Dept. of Fish and Game. The guide delineates public and private land and describes the uses permissible on each. The pamphlet is available from regional fish and game offices or from the Parks Division, Dept. of Fish and Game; Helena, MT 59601.—Ed.

It's Your Place, Too

TO THE ETHICAL HUNTER, the land on which he hunts holds a special value. Over the seasons, he has come to know the area—that covert which always holds at least one grouse or the thick swamp where an elusive buck hangs out. There is a kinship with the place, and it matters not that the marshes or fields to which the hunter returns each fall do not

belong to him. Although the hunter holds no title to the property, it is, in a sense, his place. And he respects the land as if it were his own.

If all hunters had this attitude toward the private land on which they had permission to hunt, the problem of hunter access to private property would be minor. As it is, the access problem becomes more serious each year. Comments from landowners, whether local farmers or city dwellers with country retreats, make it clear that the "no hunting" signs typically go up as a result of anti-hunter, not anti-hunting, sentiment.

We are all painfully familiar with the long list of offenses perpetrated by the slob hunter. They range from acts of outright vandalism, such as cutting barbed wire fences, to plain thoughtlessness, such as not closing a gate. Near the top of the list of complaints is the problem of litter. Not only are beer cans and assorted trash an eyesore, they present an unpleasant and time-consuming cleanup task for the landowner.

The extent of the trash problem is illustrated in a letter written by a landowner to a state conservation department publication. The writer described himself as neither pro- nor anti-hunter and as someone who did not originally object to hunters on his property. Realizing it would be unfair to blame hunters exclusively for his litter problem, he carefully checked the amount of trash collected during, and out of, hunting season. Within a week after the season, two full 40-gallon drums of trash were collected. More trash was recovered during the six-week hunting season than during the entire 46 weeks of nonhunting. Unfortunately, this situation is not atypical.

While it is difficult for the sportsman to do much about some of the offenses of the slob hunter, something can be done about the litter problem. If trash is a problem in your hunting area, organize your hunting partners in a cleanup campaign and make the landowner aware of your action. It may not be your trash, but it is, in a sense, your place. — National Shooting Sports Foundation. ■



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Saline Seep: Only A Symptom

In the March/April 1977 issue, there was an article by Mike Aderhold, "Saline Seep—Why we Have it, How to Prevent It." My compliments to Mr. Aderhold for an excellent job on the history and impacts of the dry land saline seep problem. I was particularly pleased that he stressed the many impacts of polluted surface and ground water supplies on wildlife, as well as livestock and domestic use. Land productivity is only part of the problem.

His review of measures for prevention and control, however, was not up to date. Either the elimination of the loss of moisture below the root zone on the recharge area or drainage of the seep area were given as solutions to the problem. But, drainage without corrective cropping practices on the recharge area is *not* recommended. It usually only transfers the problem down slope, often to a neighbor's land. Continued influx of water and salt from the recharge area presents some real problems in disposal of the salty drainage water.

Saline seep is only a symptom of a

larger problem, a problem which lies with the excess accumulation of moisture under the widely used crop-fallow system of farming. To control any problem you must attack it at its source and for saline seep control, this means flexible, intensive cropping of the recharge area. The seep will reclaim itself once the water table has been lowered by cutting off the *source* of the water. In most cases, natural precipitation is able to reach the salts down below the root zone and return the seeped area to productive use.

The key to the saline seep problem is *flexible* intensive cropping to make adequate use of the available precipitation. We will never be able to prevent new and further outbreaks of saline seep if we continue to use the rigid crop-fallow system of farming. Many dry land farming areas that presently do not have saline seep problems are experiencing serious ground water degradation. Prevention means a regional change of cropping practices and not just stopgap control measures after the seeps have developed.

Two additional references on the

saline seep problem not mentioned in the article are "Saline Seep Educational Folder" and "Proceedings of the Regional Saline Seep Symposium" that was conducted in Bozeman in December 1975. They are the most complete, up-to-date summaries available.

Again, my compliments to Mr. Aderhold for an excellent article. It is encouraging to see a growing number of people concerned about the water quality impacts of excessive moisture loss under the crop-fallow system of farming. I hope my comments have helped to clarify the direction of control.—*Roger Veseth, coordinator, Montana Saline Seep Program, Dept. of State Lands; Helena, Mont.*

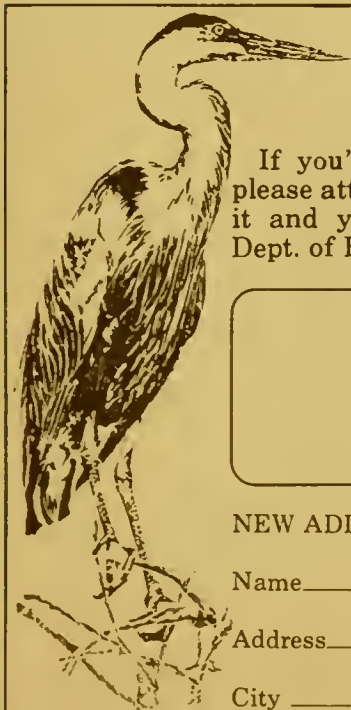
Anti-Hunters Need Better Arguments

I would like to reply to Eva Wall's letter, which appeared in the Jan./Feb. 1977 issue.

Ms. Wall made a major factual error when she wrote that animals such as the fox, bobcat, lynx, coyote and wolf are hunted for no other reason than the fact that they kill the same animals hunters want to kill for sport. One of the main reasons they are hunted (and trapped) is that their pelts are valuable on the fur market.

Coyotes do kill significant numbers of livestock in some areas, hence the predator control budget. Although coyotes do kill deer at times, deer are not their major source of food and it is unlikely they would kill enough of them to keep the population from becoming too large. A deer is a little harder to catch and kill than a sheep or calf.

Ms. Wall also states the hunter would try for an animal in good flesh, which probably would survive the winter. Well, during the hunting season, which occurs in the fall, the vast majority of game animals is in good flesh. Starvation, if it happens, will occur later, in late winter or early spring when the range is severely diminished due to snow pack. An animal that is completely healthy in November could well be dead or emaciated in March. It is, of course,



Moving?

If you're planning to move in the near future, please attach the label from your last issue and send it and your new address to *Montana Outdoors*, Dept. of Fish and Game; Helena, MT 59601.

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only a value judgment to maintain that slaughtering a domestic animal is different than killing a wild animal. The only difference, in my opinion, is that the wild animal has a much better chance.

If anti-hunters want to be taken seriously, they will have to exhibit a much better understanding of the facts than Ms. Wall.—*Roger Stang; Missoula, Mont.*

Montana's Mount Rushmore

On page 16 of your May/June 1977 issue, you have a picture of boating on the Jefferson River, with the Tobacco Root Mountains in the background. It is the best picture that I have seen of these mountains and shows "Man-Faced Mountain" very clearly. If you take a close look to the left of the snow-covered range, you will see very distinctly the head of a man in a reclining position. The eye, nose, mouth and ear are very clear.

I think that this face of a man is much more distinct than the images at Mount Rushmore National

Memorial in South Dakota that they have been trying to promote over television just recently. I feel that you should point it out in your next issue of the magazine; it is certainly very significant.

I was raised in the Highland Mountains south of Butte. From any high point in the eastern foothills of the Highlands, you could see the Tobacco Roots and "Man-Faced Mountain" very easily. It was a breathtaking view and "Man-Faced Mountain" has become a local landmark.—*Art Mattila; Florence, Mont.*

Let's Ban 'Em All

In regard to the letter, "Ban Motorbikes," in your May/June 1977 issue—yes, let's ban motorbikes, hunters, fishermen, campers, etc. All of these can be irritating to others.

Motorbikes can be ridden quietly and there are a lot of senior citizens on them.

Campers irritating? Have you noticed the leveling holes dug in hillsides, "Porta Pots" dumped in the

brush near lakes, campers holding up traffic and using lots of gas?

Let's live and let live. Report the violators only.—*Don Mergenthal; Augusta, Mont.*

Magazine Educates Public

We at the Florida Wildlife Sanctuary thoroughly enjoy your publication and wish more people would read this type of magazine rather than the slanderous gossip newspapers like *Midnight*, *National Enquirer*, etc.

The Florida Wildlife Sanctuary, which is the first wildlife hospital in the nation open 24 hours a day, is also an environmental clearinghouse to answer questions about any living creature for various organizations. As part of our environmental library, we subscribe to practically all game and fish commission and conservation magazines. In fact, we receive these publications from most of the 48 state game and fish commissions, in addition to *Mainstream* from the Animal Protection Institute, zoo reviews and wilderness reports.

The End of a Rainbow

Too many people! Montana is a land at the end of a rainbow. With a growing population, what will happen to this precious state of ours?

Trying to find a fishing spot on a lake is like trying to solve a puzzle. Where will the public someday go? We, too, have a right to enjoy this state.

I really enjoy the outdoors, but where can I go if there is no place to go? Where, also, will the grizzly and many other animals go? We need to preserve this land. Then all persons, from the photographer to the hunter, can enjoy the same land that only a few could relish. *More* public land is needed now for our growing population, not *less*.

We must all decide what will happen to this state of ours. I am not an expert on how we can solve this problem, but it can be solved if everyone is concerned. I am, and I hope you are, too. It is your state and you must decide its destiny.—*David Harter, student, Flathead High School; Kalispell, Mont.*



graphics: Vern Craig

We would like to compliment you on your magazine and its beautiful stories to better educate the public, especially the young people, as well as some of the beautiful pictures that are shown of wildlife in its natural habitat.

If more people would read publications such as yours, they would learn more about their neighbor next door.—*Carlton O. Teate, executive director, Florida Wildlife Sanctuary; Melbourne, Fla.*

Practice Conservation Wherever it's Needed

I would like to find out more about conservation efforts in the state of Montana, particularly in regard to establishment of a zone of critical habitat for the grizzly bear. As a person actively involved in protecting

wildlife and natural resources and who would like to see a cleaner, healthier and less congested life for everyone, I feel that I have a duty and a right to take an interest in conservation wherever it needs to be practiced, not only in my home state. I hope that Montana appreciates this interest.

I don't know what your administrative setup is in Montana. Here in Louisiana, it is rather absurd—all administrative personnel here are appointed by the governor, none of them have science-oriented backgrounds and the governor himself has never hidden the fact that he couldn't care less about the environment. There are staff biologists, of course, but they can only make recommendations, not decisions. Outside interference is greatly resented, although local authorities have totally neglected their responsibilities.

We would like to see large areas in Montana and neighboring states

follow the recommendations of the National Parks and Conservation Assn. and designate 13 million acres as critical grizzly bear habitat. This would allow only activity by man which would in no way undermine the grizzly's status, and would place all responsibility for tragedies involving grizzlies in these areas on the humans involved. It would prohibit the taking of grizzlies to protect domestic livestock. We would not like to see a replay of the farce involving wolves in Minnesota, where a fragmentary wolf population of 1,800 animals brings cries for their destruction because a few people insist on infringing on wilderness areas. Any pressure Montana officials can bring to bear on Louisiana to insure the protection of Louisiana's wetlands and bottom land hardwood forests would be most welcome by those of us involved in conservation.—*Joseph I. Vincent; Marrero, La.*

Contributors

Land owned by the Dept. of Fish and Game represents a small percentage of Montana's total area—slightly more than one-third of one per cent. Yet that land provides a tremendous range of outdoor opportunities, ranging from camping, hunting and fishing to bird watching, hiking and searching for mushrooms. Recently, the department has been criticized for its land acquisition practices. Some critics have charged that land the department buys is removed from agricultural production. Others believe the legislature should have a firm hand in the department's buying procedures. For a thorough analysis of the situation, with some answers to these and other points, turn to "Land Acquisition—a Vital Program Mired in Controversy." Author **Harley Yeager** is the department's information officer in Great Falls, a position he formerly held in Billings and Glasgow. He earned a B.S. degree from Montana State University, Bozeman, in fish and wildlife management and has done graduate work in that area and in rare and endangered wildlife and environmental policy and administration. Turn to page 2 for his article.

Montana Outdoors thanks the following contributors to our special section on landowner/recreationist relations, "In Search of a Better Relationship": **Jack Galt**, Mar-

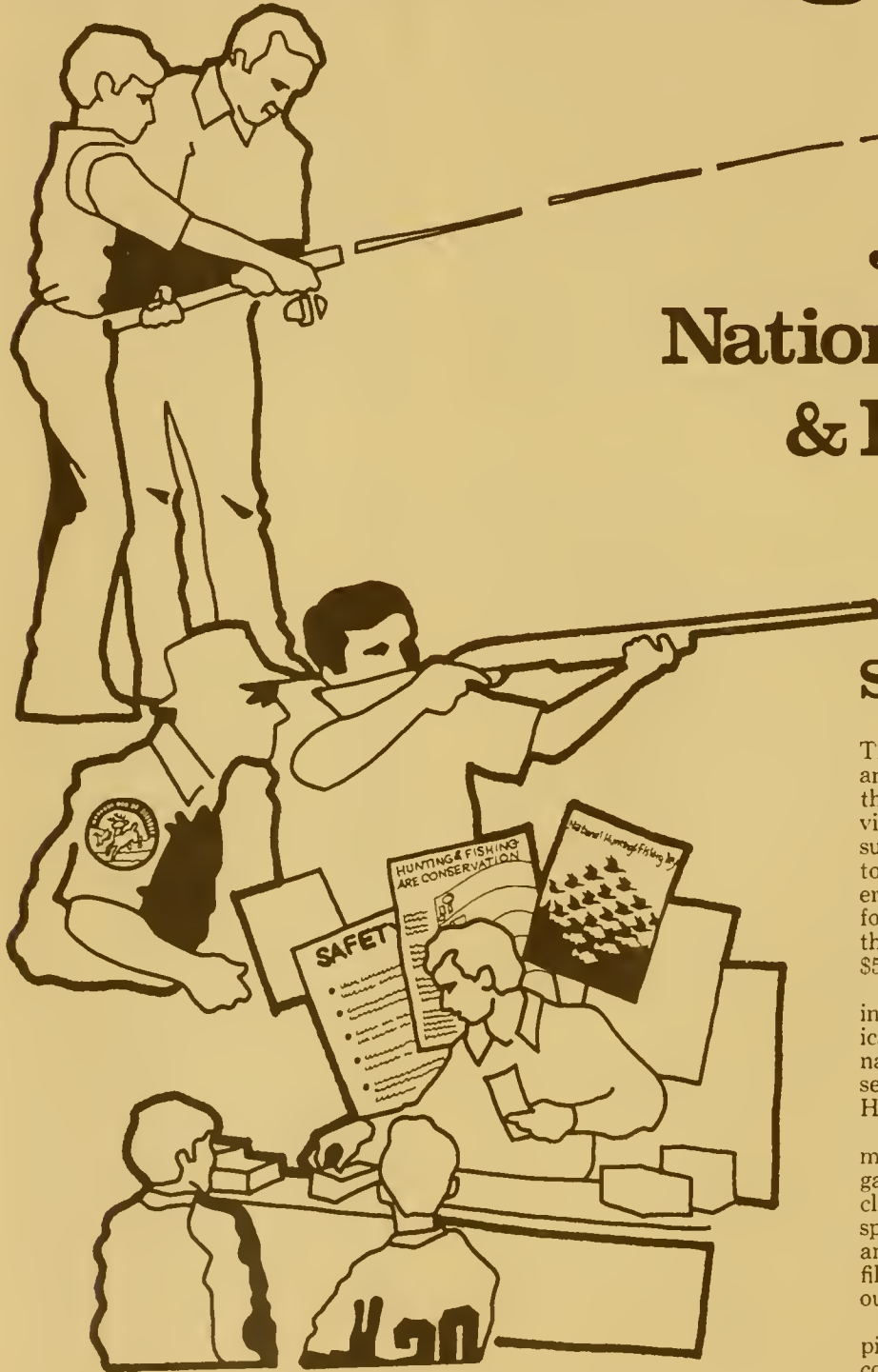
tinsdale, is a rancher and Republican member of the Montana Senate. **John Gilpatrick** has lived his entire life on the family's foothill mountain ranch near Hilger. **Land M. Lindbergh**, a member of the Montana Fish and Game Commission, ranches in the Blackfoot Valley near Greenough. **Lynne Eggart** lives on a ranch near Big Horn; she is past president and current secretary of the Rosebud-Treasure Wildlife Assn. and an avid hunter. **Bill Millhollin** of Forsyth, an Iowan turned Montanan, is past president of the Rosebud-Treasure Wildlife Assn. and remains active on its board of directors. On sabbatical from an 8-5 job, **Dan Vichorek** of Helena is a free-lance writer and frequent fisherman. **Tom Greenwood** is the department's parks manager for the Missoula region. Their comments begin on page 13.

Silver Creek is a small mountain stream originating on the east face of the Continental Divide above Marysville, 15 miles northwest of Helena. Because this part of the Silver Creek drainage has been mined almost continuously since the 1860s, many fishermen were skeptical of the tip that trout really inhabited "that little creek by the Marysville Road with all the mining piles around it." Many of the skeptics were won over and Helena area residents began to

utilize the Silver Creek fishery. Then in 1976 the department began receiving complaints there were no fish in Silver Creek. Department biologists investigated the situation. They concluded the culprit was cyanide—used by a nearby mill to extract silver and gold from their ores. **Ken Knudson** unravels "The Saga of Silver Creek," beginning on page 30. Knudson is the department's water pollution control biologist. He holds a B.A. in zoology and an M.S. in aquatic biology, both from the University of Montana, Missoula.

A small, red flag hammered into the main ridge of a mountain doesn't seem very significant. When you discover the flag signals a road ripped through a fir thicket high on the ridge, that's something else. When you connect the pieces and realize this ground has been reduced to so many squares on some surveyor's table, you realize that another of the places that made Montana special has been lost forever. "There's a Red Flag on Deer Mountain" is a personal account by **Jim Posewitz**—a recollection of teaching boys to hunt, of learning about the lay of a mountain and the habits of its deer. Posewitz is administrator of the department's Ecological Services Division. He holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in fish and wildlife management from MSU. Turn to page 34 for his article.

55 Million Americans can't be wrong



Join them at: National Hunting & Fishing Day

Saturday, Sept. 24

There are an estimated 55 million hunters and fishermen in the United States and in the time it takes to read this they will provide about \$2,500.00 for conservation. If that surprises you, you'll be even more surprised to learn that sportsmen have been the leaders in the American conservation movement for the past 75 years — during which time they have provided conservation with over \$5 BILLION.

In recognition of these contributions, and in an effort to enlist the support of all Americans in the conservation cause, 40 of the nation's leading environmental groups have set Saturday, September 24th as National Hunting and Fishing Day.

At the NHF Day program in your community, and at some 3,000 others being organized across the nation, local sportsmen's clubs and conservation groups will sponsor special displays and lectures on conservation and wildlife management. There will also be films, exhibits and free instruction in the outdoor sports.

If you want to learn how to cast, shoot or pitch a tent, or if you just want to watch a conservation movie, plan to spend an hour or so at the National Hunting and Fishing Day program in your town on September 24.

55 million Americans can't be wrong and you won't go wrong if you join them on September 24th.

Preserving the “Old Ways” is Appealing, But This is Ridiculous

At times, it seems unbelievable. But we still have the most perfectly preserved statutory relic of the exploitative, damn-the-environment days on the law books—105 years after it was passed.

It's the federal Mining Law of 1872. Under this legal dinosaur, mining on public land is a preemptive use—superior in right to wildlife resources, grazing, logging or recreational uses such as hunting or fishing.

When enacted, the law presumed that “out there” in that vast, empty wilderness of 1872, there could be no undesirable results from open-ended exploitation. Whether that presumption was correct, there definitely are undesirable impacts from modern mining development. For starters, the pick, shovel and burro have been replaced by 200-ton trucks, 75-cubic-yard draglines and D-9 bulldozers. Obviously, the law has long ago outlived its intent. Yet, efforts to repeal it continually fall by the wayside.

Briefly, the law says a discoverer of a valuable mineral deposit can establish legal claim to it by marking the boundaries and filing its location with the county clerk. (Certain minerals are excepted under the Mineral Lands Leasing Act [30 U.S.C.A., Sec. 181 and sections following] and the so-called Common Materials on Public Lands Act [30 U.S.C.A., Sec. 611].) The size of the claim is limited, but not the number of claims a miner can stake. The Wilderness Act of 1964 slightly changed the scope of the 1872 law by cutting off minerals exploration in wilderness areas after Dec. 31, 1983.

Under the antiquated laws, the miner need only establish sufficient “mineralization” to stake a claim on public land. Before Sept. 1, 1974, when the provision was amended, the miner wasn't required to notify the federal government of the mine's location and a federal permit wasn't needed to operate. Nothing in the original law prior to the 1974 amendment controlled his operation or required restoration or treatment of

“disturbed” land. *By a relatively simple process, a miner in some areas still can obtain a patent to his claim that gives him ownership of the property.*

The mining industry has, in part, scoffed at public concern. The industry points out that only a small fraction of the United States is actually mined. But this claim ignores the tens of thousands of square miles of surface peeled off and crisscrossed with roads to find that tiny fraction.

How much of the public domain has been claimed under the 1872 law? Nobody really knows. One authority on the subject estimates “about 500,000 square miles” controlled by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service in the 11 western states—an area about twice the size of Texas—has been claimed. The scars on Montana's Elkhorns, Beartooths, Tobacco Roots and other mountain ranges are mute testimony to the urgent need to rid the law books of this relic.

Although certain mining spokesmen imply that those favoring reform of ancient mining laws want to “lock up” the public domain and prevent all mining, only a few—if any—support such action. What most of us want is a law that gives the public—after all, *we are the landowners, not the miners*—the right to decide when, where and how to prospect and mine on public land.

Our expanding population requires more and more of just about everything, including minerals, to maintain the so-called “good life.” So Montana can expect even more interest in the treasures hidden under the “Big Sky Country.”

Yes, a legitimate need exists for some of these minerals. But we simply must stop going after them with the archaic mining laws that hold no regard for environmental protection. For the sake of those who will hopefully enjoy Montana's scenic grandeur, abundant wildlife and clean air and water after us, we must repeal this prehistoric absurdity.—*Ken Walcheck*



F&G photo. Randy Haight

The Saga of Silver Creek

by Ken Knudson

LIKE A CHILD, the headwaters of a stream have a fragile and innocent beginning, full of potential, the start of a journey to dramas unknown. So begins Silver Creek, a small mountain stream originating on the east face of the Continental Divide above the town of Marysville, 15 miles northwest of Helena.

Before agricultural and residential development in the Helena Valley, Silver Creek was a direct artery of the Missouri River, its mouth entering near the present site of Lake Helena, over 20 miles from its source. Today, because of irrigation diversions and domestic water withdrawals, its free-flowing length

is confined to the upstream half of this original distance. Here, the stream flows year-round, although in places it narrows to only a few feet wide. Miners have sought precious metals almost continuously since 1864 in this upper portion of the Silver Creek drainage. The most obvious scars are spoil piles left by a large dredging operation in the 1940s and by the Drumlummon (or Drum Lummon) Mine, which began operating in the 1870s and was still in limited operation as late as the mid-1960s. These two major mining ventures, as well as the many other smaller mines within the immediate

area, have given the Silver Creek drainage a reputation as one of the richest gold- and silver-producing areas in Montana.

Since these early miners were not required to reclaim their workings, Silver Creek itself has had to "re-create" a stream channel by slowly wearing away at placer spoils, dredge dams, tailings piles and discarded buildings and roads. With passage of time, a cutthroat trout population gradually re-established itself within the vestiges of the stream. Helena area residents began to utilize this fishery, most of them initially skeptical of the tip that trout really inhabited "that little creek by the Marysville Road with all the mining piles around it."

Silver Creek represents a dramatic example of the ability of a fish population to recover from physical abuses, channel alterations, prolonged periods of silty water and destruction of food sources. It may take a long time for re-establishment to occur, but, in time, at least a partial return of the fish population is possible. However, biological recovery is hampered severely, or eliminated completely, if poisonous materials are introduced into a stream.

IN FALL 1976, recreationists who normally frequent Silver Creek began to complain to Dept. of Fish and Game employees that they were having no fishing success in the stream's "lower" section. After more thorough questioning, it seemed the problem centered on the upper portion of the stream, below an ore processing mill adjacent to Silver Creek on the Marysville Road, approximately two miles above Highway 279 (Lincoln Highway). This mill, in turn, reportedly utilized a cyanide extraction technique to recover gold and silver.

An article by Glenn Oakley in the Nov./Dec. 1976 *Montana Outdoors*, "The Rock Creek Mine," alluded to the dangers to fish and other aquatic life inherent in cyanide leaching mills, as well as to the secrecy that shrouds their existence from the eyes of public and regulatory agencies. Ironically, when investigation and publicity informed the public and governmental agencies of potential problems on Rock Creek, these very dangers were even further advanced on Silver Creek. Here, as on Rock Creek, very few persons knew of the gold processing mill. Again, a highly concentrated cyanide solution was dangerously close to a trout stream. The difference between the two situations was that the Rock Creek development was temporarily stopped before any cyanide was brought to the mill site; on Silver Creek, this highly toxic chemical was actually used during milling.

After complaints by frustrated fishermen, including one report of several dead fish in February 1976, electrofishing (fish "shocking") was conducted at several locations on Silver Creek. (In fish shocking, biologists place electrical probes in the water; the electric field attracts and stuns all fish within a radius of several feet, allowing them to be easily netted. The fish are then weighed and measured

before being released, unharmed, back into the stream. Shocking is a standard procedure used by fisheries biologists to determine a stream's fish population.)

The only species of fish collected on Silver Creek was cutthroat trout. While the dead fish reported in February 1976 were never recovered and tested for cause of death, the drastic contrast between fish populations found above versus immediately below the mill led biologists to infer a relationship existed between the mill and the barrenness below it. In a 330-foot (100-meter) shocking section above the mill, 114 fish were found, while only 1 fish was found in three sections totaling 1,075 feet (325 meters) below the mill.

Biologists were particularly surprised to find no fish in the 360-foot (110-meter) shocking section near Birdseye Road, approximately four miles below the mill site. Fish habitat here is excellent and Silver Creek slowly meanders through predominantly undercut banks carpeted with overhanging terrestrial vegetation, both of which provide ideal protected cover areas for fish. Bottom gravels are clean, with bountiful food sources. The physical habitat of this section is superior even to the highly populated section above the mill. Formerly, anglers have reported success in and immediately above this section of Silver Creek.

WHEN WHITE AND ASSOCIATES, INC. began developing the mill site, the company constructed—or at least reinforced with bulldozer roads—settling ponds downstream from the mill. Ponds were built in and around spoil piles left by the 1940 dredging. One of these bulldozer roads was built directly on approximately 500 feet (150 meters) of Silver Creek. The builders didn't place a culvert under any portion of this road; if one had been used during construction of the road, it was not functioning at the time of the pollution investigation. This road, then, barred fish from migrating and the creek was forced to seep under the road for several hundred feet.

Although construction of this bulldozer road apparently violated the Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act of 1975, intended to prevent such negligent stream channel alterations, it aided the department's "after the fact" fish kill investigation. Because the bulldozer road blocked repopulation of the fishery from upstream, the fish population downstream was essentially isolated. So, effects of a pollutant killing fish in this section could still be accurately measured. In addition, repopulation couldn't occur downstream since, as mentioned earlier, Silver Creek no longer connects directly with the Missouri River.

After the fish shocking results, biologists directed their attention to the cyanide mill leaching site and settling ponds as suspected sources of the pollution. The gold and silver extraction process at this mill involves adding a highly concentrated cyanide solu-

tion to old tailings (waste deposits) left by previous mills. The cyanide binds to its small flakes of gold and silver which can then be filtered or chemically removed. The old tailings, with their minute amounts of gold and silver thus removed, become "new" tailings—unwanted wastes which must be disposed of in settling ponds. Since ponds for the present mill were built on and around the finely divided gravels of dredge spoil piles, the potential for leakage is very high, unless bottoms and sides are thoroughly sealed.

During the pollution investigation, one of the mill ponds (actually a holding pond for a cyanide-laden solution), still contained a considerable amount of process water, even though the mill reportedly had been temporarily shut down for over six months. In October 1976, biologists collected water samples from this pond and from Silver Creek above and below the mill. The pond contained high concentrations of cyanide, as well as other potentially dangerous compounds of zinc, mercury, silver and copper. Cyanide was also found in Silver Creek *below* the pond area, although at a considerably lower level than recorded *in* the pond. However, biologists detected no cyanide in the creek upstream from the cyanide leaching operation.

In November, a seepage flowing directly into Silver Creek was discovered within the settling pond area. Laboratory testing revealed this seep contained cyanide at a concentration potentially toxic to trout. Additional seepages, containing even higher concentrations of cyanide, were later discovered along the walls of the settling ponds.

How toxic is cyanide and how dangerous to aquatic life? That may depend on whom you ask—a mining engineer or a fisheries biologist. A mining engineer quoted in "The Rock Creek Mine" stated that adding ferrous (iron) sulfate is "a fail-safe method for 'killing' cyanide" (making it harmless to fish). When biologists first began investigating pollution on Silver Creek, John B. White, owner of the mill, sent a letter to the Dept. of Fish and Game disclaiming the possibility that any fishery loss in the stream could be related to his operation. "Cyanide," he wrote, "is rendered inert [nontoxic] during our milling process."

But biologists came to a different conclusion about cyanide as a culprit from tests conducted as early as 1956. These biologists indicated that, with certain conditions in a stream, any cyanide complex, regardless of what metal it may be combined with, has the potential of toxicity to fish. These biologists conceded that high concentrations of cyanide in process ponds may, under proper conditions, be only slightly toxic to fish. Once this process water enters streams, however, and the cyanide concentration actually decreases, the toxicity normally *increases*. This apparent discrepancy is governed partly by the acid-base balance (pH) of the cyanide process water.

When gold and silver are extracted—thus involving the mill ponds as well—the pH of the cyanide-laden water is quite high or "basic." Moun-

tain streams in Montana typically have a much lower pH, nearer the acid side of this balance. As long as the pH remains high, toxicity to fish is minimized. Once the solution enters a slightly acidic stream, the toxicity to aquatic organisms may increase 10,000 times. Assumptions made by some mining engineers about the harmless nature of cyanide solutions possibly stem from evaluating only the process water, not the impact of this solution after it mixes with a mountain stream. To understand the impact of any toxic material, including cyanide, the total interrelated system—receiving stream, aquatic organisms and potential pollutant—must be examined.

TO COMPILE even more evidence about the dangers of cyanide process water to stream life, biologists conducted laboratory tests with juvenile cutthroat trout from the department hatchery in Anaconda. These trout were placed in various solutions of water from the mill pond, diluted with Silver Creek water. All tests were conducted at the department's Helena laboratory. By lowering the acidity of Silver Creek water to pH values normally found during spring run-off conditions, the toxicity of certain dilutions of the cyanide-laden pond water was drastically increased. Dilutions that took several hours to kill trout at the slightly higher pH were toxic

“. . . the most significant aspect of the saga of Silver Creek is that biologists have documented the dangers of cyanide processing mills to fish and aquatic life.”

in minutes under lowered pH conditions. The pH changes that produced these severe changes in toxicity were not in themselves drastic—only about as much as tropical fish enthusiasts adjust their fish tanks when the tanks become slightly "basic."

When investigating water pollution incidents—such as on Silver Creek—it's hard to find consolation if only a pollution source, or a cause and effect relationship between a pollutant and a severely impacted stream, has been defined. Findings must be carried further. People who fished Silver Creek tell stories of many enjoyable days spent taking nice catches. But for now, below the cyanide mill at least, anglers will have no more successful fishing days. Four to five miles of trout stream has been at least temporarily eliminated. Nor is it sufficient only to lament loss of this one stream. Enforcement action has been taken by the Water Quality Bureau of the Dept. of Health and Environmental Sciences, since it is charged with administration of state water pollution laws. The health department served a compliance order on the mill requiring elimination of the

seepage from holding ponds and curtailment of plant operation until these repairs are performed.

However, the most significant aspect of the saga of Silver Creek is that biologists have documented the dangers of cyanide processing mills to fish and aquatic life. This lesson must be publicized and emphasized to everyone—regulatory agencies, the mining industry and the public—lest loss of the Silver Creek fishery be for naught.

As explained in "The Rock Creek Mine," many state laws intended to protect Montana's environmental resources are by-passed by irresponsible individuals who seek loopholes in these regulations. The Dept. of State Lands, charged with overseeing actual development and operation of mining ventures, is powerless if an operator only intends to rework old, existing tailings, as on Silver Creek. In other situations, if a miner promises not to move over 100 tons of ore per day, he is automatically given a small miner exclusion permit. This exclusion exempts him from reclamation if the total area disturbed remains under five acres. He must not violate water pollution laws and must place a door on the mine entrance.

The Water Quality Bureau's position may be similarly weakened when attempting to enforce water pollution laws. If a company insists it isn't going to directly discharge material into state waters, application for a permit from this bureau is not required. The water pollution law states it is illegal to place wastes in such a location where they are *likely* to cause pollution, but this provision is highly debatable, almost until the wastes are actually deposited.

WHAT THEN CAN BE DONE? Certainly, Montana streams should not be sacrificed for the economic gains of a few persons. With increased prices for precious metals inevitable, no doubt the number of cyanide leaching mills will also increase. The first, and probably most important, defense for Montana's streams is an informed and enlightened public. This may sound trite, but unfortunately state lands, the Water Quality Bureau, fish and game and other state agencies have too few employees to pinpoint where every mine or mill is situated in our state. State lands, for example, employs only four inspectors to cover over 1,000 hard rock mines. With the potential dangers of cyanide process waters, no citizen should hesitate reporting the plans or existence of cyanide leaching operations to state officials.

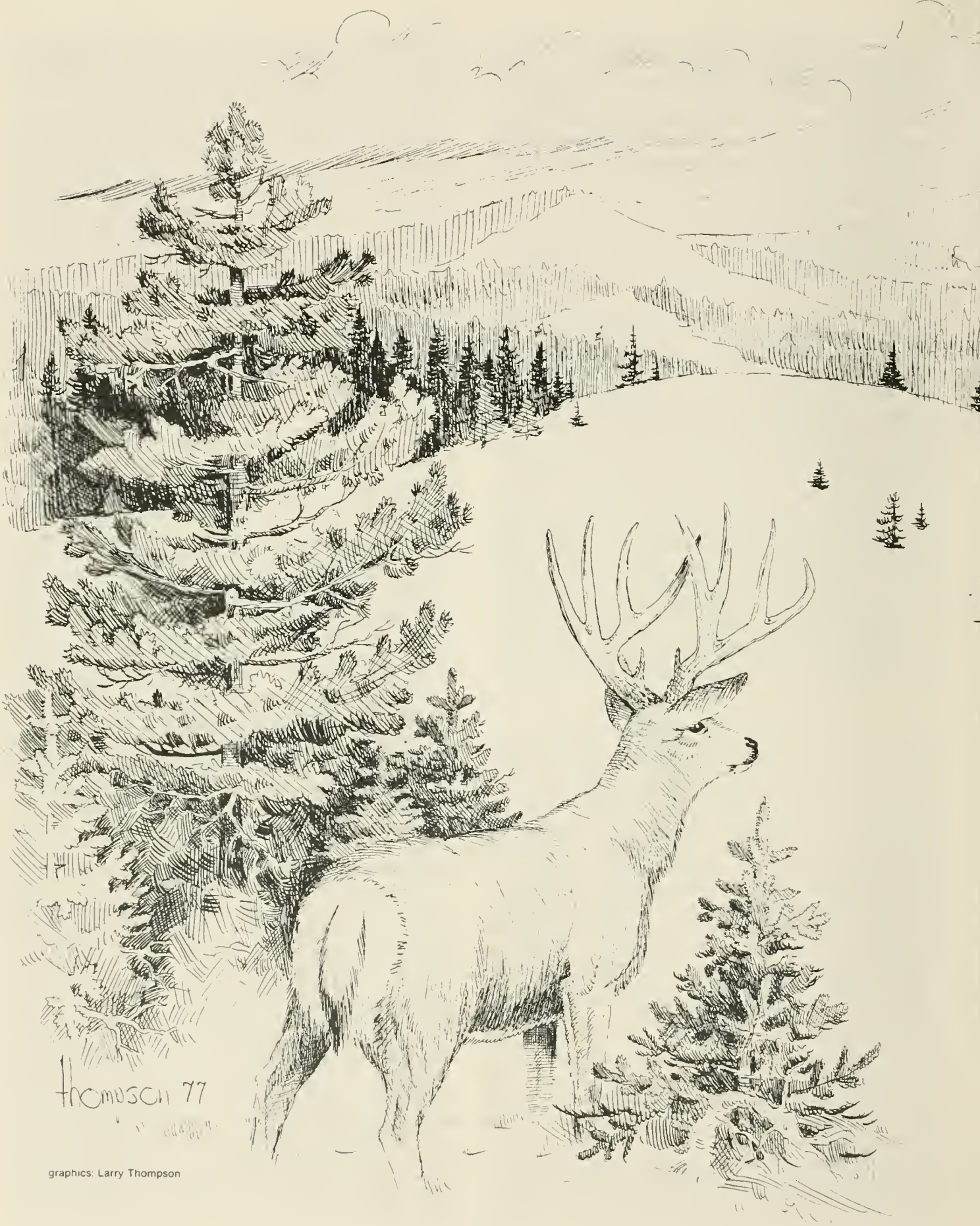
The second point of defense is an informed mining profession. These individuals must realize that improper sealing and location of ponds—such as those on Silver Creek—will not be condoned. Also, the real dangers of cyanide extraction solutions must be clearly defined and understood by all who intend to use them. Certainly, responsible miners will not be hoodwinked by others in their profession who make statements such as (from the Rock Creek article),

"You could dump it [cyanide] in those creeks and not hurt anything." Mill ponds will be properly located and sealed if dangers and potential penalties to violators are emphasized, not downplayed.

Another keystone for defense of Montana's streams includes an enlightened and informed state government. Part of this enlightenment, of course, must stem from the public informing these agencies of any suspicious mine or mill. Given the indisputable dangers inherent in cyanide mills, no responsible state official would hesitate insuring that all possible safeguards are implemented before and during operation of such a mill.

A poll conducted by the governor's office in spring 1977 found the majority of Montana citizens to be highly concerned about environmental protection. This attitude has been reflected by the actions citizens have taken through their legislators in establishing environmental safeguards superior, in most cases, to any other state's laws. A legal framework exists to control most needless environmental degradation. Of course, if the public believes certain parts of any regulations should be strengthened, such mandates should be placed on lawmakers. Senate Bill 297 was introduced during the 1977 Montana Legislature "to regulate gold and silver extraction operations to insure protection of the environment from the toxic substances involved in such operations." This act, introduced by Sens. Robert Watt (D-Missoula), Bob Brown (R-Whitefish) and Joe Roberts (D-Libby), was supported by Trout Unlimited. It would have required that a permit be issued by the Dept. of Health and Environmental Sciences before development of any cyanide leach operation. Sufficient information would have had to be furnished in the permit application to enable the health department to evaluate the applicant's ability to comply with state water pollution laws. In short, many loopholes that presently hamper attempts to regulate cyanide leach mills would have been closed. This bill was hastily written during the height of legislative activity and was far from ideal. It was killed in the Senate Natural Resources Committee, with little public input except from the mining industry, before it reached the Senate floor. In the months before the next legislature, more time should be spent designing a law safeguarding Montana's waters against cyanide operations, without placing unnecessary hardships on responsible miners.

Rumors are constantly heard about proposed cyanide mills throughout Montana. Under present laws, location or positive existence of these proposed operations remains tightly shrouded. Once such an operation is "discovered," it may be far along in development, making relocation of facilities or modification of plant design, if needed, an expensive task. A procedure for meeting with state pollution control and conservation agency personnel in early planning stages of these mills must be legally required. Only then can all streams in Montana be protected from the dangers posed by cyanide process water. ■



graphics: Larry Thompson



There's a Red Flag on Deer Mountain

by Jim Posewitz

THE MOUNTAIN really has no name. We have come to call it "Deer Mountain" as we hunted it through the years. I taught three boys to hunt its ridges, slopes and thickets. More important, my sons learned about the mountain and about the deer as a part of growing up. The mountain belonged to the deer and, seasonally, to the hunter.

The year 1976 was special on Deer Mountain. Early

in the season, one of my sons, hunting alone, killed a fat young buck at the edge of a lodgepole thicket. When we returned to pack the deer out, he led me to it by orienting from a red flag he found hammered into the main ridge. He also spoke of a road ripped through a fir thicket high on the ridge—a thicket we knew well. A year earlier it shielded a handsome old buck that fled as I tried to position a young hunter for a shot. The old buck's shield was broken now, torn apart so a vehicle could carry the flag to its station.

Two weeks later, a second son took a buck from Deer Mountain and it too was fat, in reflection of the mountain's ability to meet the needs of the deer as it had for year upon year. The deer are always there, the mountain restoring what we harvest. Because of this capacity, the mountain has become a very special place to us.

Year after year we return, always learning more about mountains and deer, always marveling at how right things must be for the deer. In the last week of the season, Wednesday to be exact, my oldest son took our finest buck of the year. He was a big, mature deer. Although the forest was dry and free of snow, giving the advantage to the buck, he was taken because the boy who hunted him had learned both the lay of the mountain and the habits of the deer. He had become a hunter. I was proud and satisfied as we strained against our pack frames, carrying that buck off Deer Mountain.

On Thursday, a Thanksgiving Day storm drove from the north and blanketed Deer Mountain with a deep layer of snow. The scale now tipped to favor the hunter, and I returned to hunt alone the slopes, ridges and thickets of Deer Mountain. In vain, I searched for a final deer for our winter fare. Although my eye searched the now familiar haunts, my mind could see only the red flag on the ridge and the ugly gash ripped through the fir thicket. I returned again and again to the flag, noting the survey stake driven into the mountain. Although no more than a foot long, I fear it has somehow pierced the heart of Deer Mountain.

The mountain, largely public land, is privately owned on its lower slopes and ridges. The deer that winter there, I suspect, are unaware of all this. They are aware only that the land supports chokecherry, Oregon grape and juniper, and that the wind blows the ridges clear in winter. Of the red flag, they are only curious.

The survey stake can only mean that Deer Mountain is being divided into little squares on a map on some surveyor's table. Like some mad alchemist, he is making square a land of meandering spring creeks, jagged ridges, rolling slopes and conical firs—perhaps little lots to peddle for second homes. The sensitivity of this alchemist has already been revealed to me. It is written in the gash torn through the fir thicket. What could he know of deer, snowshoe rabbits, black ravens and blowing snow? What does

“While it is easy and often convenient to criticize subdividers and land speculators, the whole equation depends on still another element. It also takes customers.”

he know of a big buck and his trail through a hidden saddle in the ridge? What does he know of the boy who has learned to wait hour on hour at that pass? The man who employed him to make squares on the earth so they can be divided and sold—what does he know of deer and of boys becoming hunters?

By spring, the flag was gone, torn to shreds by the same angry wind that cleared the ridges for the deer. The little squares on the map remained.

What of the hunter? The gun now idle in the cabinet, a new search was begun—not for another Deer Mountain, but for the hands that held the hammer and drove the stake, the hands that held the chain saw and finally the man and the mind who would sell a mountain they never knew. The hunter now sought to repay the mountain. It was a debt each hunter incurs, a debt that cannot be erased by another Deer Mountain, because there are no others. It could only be repaid by striving to protect the integrity of Deer Mountain, if it was at all possible.

Although initially futile, the search for the future of Deer Mountain was a rather simple affair—all it took was patience, a familiar attribute to a hunter. An initial search through the planning board, county courthouse and health department turned up no sign or clue of a subdivision near the mountain. As it turned out, review and regulation were being circumvented. It was done simply by chopping the land into pieces slightly larger than 20 acres, thereby avoiding any evaluation of impact, avoiding public review or even having to listen to an argument or plea on behalf of Montana's wildlife. Just divide and peddle—simple as that—let the buyer beware and wildlife be damned.

In March, ads began to appear in the local paper, "20 acres and larger, mountain home properties." A quick check revealed the ad was in fact Deer Mountain.

In April, with sales apparently lagging, the public was urged over the radio by a catchy little ditty to buy into the subdivision for "open spaces," "scenic beauty," "wildlife" and "fish." It seemed to matter little that open spaces would be diminished, scenic beauty would be compromised, wildlife was being placed in jeopardy and what few fish there were could only expect diminished water quality. The ditty was sung to the tune of "Oh my Darling Clementine" and began, "Timber home sites, in the mountains. . ."

Now on the sales block, the mountain became worth about \$500 an acre. Each purchaser had to buy at least 20 acres to avoid subdivision control laws; however, each could in turn divide his lot at least once and sell it. In short, a mockery was being made of legislative attempts to curb the ecological blight of rural subdivision. While it is easy and often convenient to criticize subdividers and land speculators, the whole equation depends on still another element.

It also takes customers. There are few of us who don't long for a place in the mountains. There is

nothing exceptional or unique in that. Make no mistake, however, when you satisfy that longing, it can only be accommodated by sacrificing the needs of fish and wildlife. They have no alternative. That place in the mountains is their only place. The real world of wild things is no Disneyland where we can stroll through the woods hand in hand with bears, deer and rabbits, singing "Zippity Do Da" and picking daisies.

The real world is access roads and home sites where there was once browse and bunch grass. It is yapping dogs instead of security. The real world is snowplows, school buses and grinding pickups where wildlife once patiently endured winter in quiet

"The real world of wild things is no Disneyland where we can stroll through the woods hand in hand with bears, deer and rabbits.... The real world is access roads and home sites where there was once browse and bunch grass."

solitude. It is power transmission lines and septic tanks so the home in the mountains is just like the home in town. The outdoor privy is not really what today's mountain folks had in mind. Reality is too much horse on too few acres, beating postage stamp pastures into dust and gravel.

The world of reality is calling the Dept. of Fish and Game to remove beavers which are felling aspen and plugging culverts. Reality is trapping and killing bears which are lured by smoldering garbage barrels, shallow refuse pits or greasy barbecue grills. Reality is that wildlife is really neat, just as long as it causes no inconvenience.

So it is with a thousand rural land divisions throughout Montana, and so it will be on Deer Mountain. With each "land for sale, get your 20 acres" ad in the paper and each little "buy your mountain home" ditty sung on the radio, the mountain dies a little more and Montana's special places become common places.

I could be more positive; after all, the special pleasures of Deer Mountain once belonged to my sons and to me and those memories can never be erased or even dimmed. However, the question remains: What good are those special memories when you must watch a mountain being diminished? Deer Mountain was symbolic of what the Montana way of life really was. Now, it too is fading into a future devoid of the special places that once made Montana different. ■



Landowner/Recreationist Relations
see page 13